THE SUPREME COURT'S ROLE IN DEFINING THE JURISDICTION OF MILITARY COURTS: A STUDY & PROPOSAL

CAPTAIN BRIAN C. BALDRATE [*]

[*] Judge Advocate, U.S Army. Presently assigned as Student, 53d Judge Advocate Officer Graduate Course, The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, United States Army, Charlottesville, Virginia. J.D. 2000, University of Connecticut School of Law; M.P.A. 2000, University of Connecticut School of Law; B.S. 1995, United States Military Academy. Previous assignments include: 2003-2004, Regimental Judge Advocate, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Al Anbar, Iraq; 2001-2003, Trial Counsel, Legal Assistance Officer, Fort Carson, Colorado; 1995-1997, Scout Platoon Leader, Tank Platoon Leader, First Cavalry Division. Member of the Bars of Connecticut and the United States Supreme Court. This article was submitted in partial completion of the Master of Laws requirements of the 53d Judge Advocate Officer Graduate Course.

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED
2005	**N/A**	**-**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
The Supreme Court's Role in Defining The Jurisdiction of Military Courts: A Study & Proposal	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **The Judge Advocate Generals Legal Center and School United States Army Charlottesville, Virginia**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			
unclassified	**unclassified**	**unclassified**	**UU**	**147**	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

THE SUPREME COURT'S ROLE IN DEFINING THE JURISDICTION OF MILITARY COURTS: A STUDY & PROPOSAL

CAPTAIN BRIAN C. BALDRATE

> *"Orderly government requires that the judiciary be as scrupulous not to interfere with legitimate Army matters as the Army must be scrupulous not to intervene in judicial matters."*
>
> —Orloff v. Willoughby, 345 U.S. 83, 94 (1953).

ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the Supreme Court's judicial review over military tribunals to identify the constitutional limits of military courts within America's system of government. The central thesis is that the Supreme Court's review over military courts has failed to coherently define the boundary between federal courts and military tribunals. Rather than creating a consistent precedent, the Court's decisions have led to arbitrary results and an increased uncertainty about whether the military commissions at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba are constitutional. This article seeks to remedy this problem by proposing a method of constitutional interpretation that creates a principled distinction between the cases that belong in federal court and those matters properly before military tribunals.

First, it lays the groundwork by defining the four different types of military tribunals and examining the nature of Supreme Court review over military courts. Next, it examines the historic use of military courts and looks at each instance of Supreme Court review over these military tribunals. Finally, it critiques the Court's textualist interpretation of the Constitution and demonstrates how translation theory provides a more effective method of defining the boundaries of military courts. It concludes by explaining why the current trial of Salim Hamdan by military commission is unconstitutional under translation theory.

Table of Contents

> *Military law proper is that branch of public law, which is enacted or ordained for the government exclusively of the military state, and is operative equally in peace and in war. We term it . . . military law, in contra-distinction to the law administered by the civil tribunals. Like that law, it consists of a Written and an Unwritten law.*[1]

I. Introduction

Imagine the following scenarios.[2] In the spring of 2005, an Air Force colonel's wife, stationed with her husband in England, goes to a military aircraft hanger and detonates a bomb destroying a B-52 bomber and killing dozens of Airmen. Meanwhile, a Marine Corps civilian employee, working as an interrogator in Iraq, tortures and kills an Iraqi prisoner. Back in the United States, two former Army airborne rangers sneak onto Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and steal several automatic machine guns, grenades, and claymore mines for use in forming an extremist militia group. That same week, in Omaha, Nebraska, a retired World War II Navy fighter pilot files a false tax return by failing to declare his winnings from his weekly church bingo game. Surprisingly, under current Supreme Court methodology, the only person subject to a military trial is the retired Navy pilot charged with tax evasion. Even more concerning is that according to the Supreme Court's methodology, the Constitution of the United States mandates this anomalous outcome. Given the inconsistency of the Supreme Court's current military jurisdiction analysis, it is understandable that there is

[1] WILLIAM WINTHROP, MILITARY LAW AND PRECEDENTS 17 (2d ed. 1920).

[2] The following completely fictitious scenarios are not intended to represent any actual events. Rather, they are designed to demonstrate the consequences of applying current Supreme Court doctrine to potential contemporary problems.

such confusion about the constitutionality of the military tribunals in use at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, President George W. Bush published an Executive Order establishing military commissions.[3] Pursuant to this order, on August 24, 2004, the U.S. Defense Department convened the first U.S. military commission in more than 50 years, charging Salim Ahmed Hamdan with conspiracy to commit war crimes.[4] Less than three months later, a federal district court halted the proceedings, declaring that Hamdan could not be prosecuted by military commission.[5] While the *Hamdan* decision works its way through the appellate process,[6] the military commissions program remains on hold.[7] During this same time period, federal district courts have issued several additional conflicting rulings

[3] Military Order of Nov. 13, 2001: Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism, 3 C.F.R. 918 (2005). Following the President's Order the Department of Defense subsequently issued rules and procedures for these military commissions, *See* 32 C.F.R. §§ 9.1-18.6 (2005); *see also* Department of Defense, Military Commissions (providing extensive links to background materials on the Military Commissions), *available at* http://www.defenselink.mil/news/commissions.html.

[4] *See* Press Release, U.S. Department of Defense Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, No. 820-04, First Military Commission Convened at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Aug. 24, 2004), *available at* http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2004/nr20040824-1164.html.

[5] Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 344 F. Supp. 2d 152, 173-74 (D.D.C. 2004) (holding "petitioner may not be tried by Military Commission for the offenses with which he is charged.").

[6] Hamdan's case is before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. *See* Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 2005 U.S. App. LEXIS 2474 (D.C. Cir. 2005) (oral argument set for Apr. 7, 2005).

[7] The military began a second military commission on an Australian citizen, David Hicks. *See* Press Release, U.S. Department of Defense Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, No. 820-04; Australian Citizen is the Second Commissions Case (Aug. 25, 2004) *available at* http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2004/nr20040825-1169.html. Following the federal district court decision in *Hamdan*, the military suspended all military commissions pending final resolution of the appeals in Hamdan. *See* Department of Defense Military Commissions Update (Nov. 4, 2004), *available at* http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/d20041104update.pdf; *see also* Hicks v. Bush, 02-CV-0299 (D.D.C. 2004) (holding Hick's *habeas* claim in abeyance pending final resolution of all appeals in *Hamdan*); Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jack Einwechter, Prosecutor, Office of Military Commissions, the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School (Mar. 4, 2005).

on the military's authority over detainees at Guantanamo Bay.[8] Despite uncertainty about the constitutionality of these military commissions, the Supreme Court has so far declined to resolve Hamdan's case.[9] The Supreme Court's reluctance to resolve *Hamdan* is understandable, because the Court lacks a coherent framework for analyzing the constitutionality of military jurisdiction.

Following President Bush's decision to establish military commissions, many prominent scholars wrote substantive articles about whether these commissions are constitutional.[10] Much of the debate concerning the constitutionality of these commissions focused on whether the *procedures* of military commissions comport with Due Process and other Fifth and Sixth Amendment protections contained in the Bill of Rights.[11] However, the

---

[8] *See* Molly McDonough, *Split Decision Divides Detainees' Fates, Supreme Court Likely Will Have To Make Final Decision*, ABA J., (Feb. 4, 2005), *available at* http://www.abanet.org/journal/redesign /f4gitmo.html; *compare Hamdan*, 344 F. Supp. at 153 (declaring military commissions unlawful), and *In re Guantanamo* Detainee Cases, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1236 (D.D.C. 2005) (allowing Guantanamo detainees to challenge their detention in federal court) *with* Khalid v. Bush, No. 04 –CV-2035 (D.D.C. 2005) (holding Guantanamo detainees have no right to seek *habeas corpus* relief).

[9] The Supreme Court denied Hamdan's two requests for expedited review. *See* Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 125 S. Ct. 972 (U.S. 2005) ("Petition for writ of certiorari before judgment to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit denied."); Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 125 S. Ct. 680 (U.S. 2004) ("Motion of petitioner to expedite consideration of the petition for writ of certiorar*i* before judgment denied.").

[10] *See, e.g.*, Curtis A. Bradley & Jack L. Goldsmith, *The Constitutional Validity of Military Commissions*, 5 GREEN BAG 2D 249 (2002) (supporting the constitutionality of military commissions); Neal K. Katyal & Laurence H. Tribe, *Waging War, Deciding Guilt: Trying the Military Tribunals*, 111 YALE L. J. 1259 (2002) (arguing against their constitutionality); Ruth Wedgewood, *Al Qaeda, Terrorism, and Military Commissions,* 96 AM. J. INT'L L. 328, 329 (2002); Jack L. Goldsmith & Cass R. Sunstein, *Military Tribunals and Legal Culture: What A Difference Sixty Years Makes*, 19 CONST. COMMENT. 261 (2002); Michael R. Belknap, *A Putrid Pedigree*, 38 CAL. W. L. REV. 433, 480 (2002).

[11] *See* David Glazier, *Kangaroo Court or Competent Tribunal?: Judging The 21st Century Military Commission*, 89 VA. L. REV. 2005 (2003) ("As government preparations for conducting these trials progress, however, there has been a discernable shift in the debate from a historical analysis toward a more narrowly focused discussion about procedural concerns regarding the proposed trial rules."); *see, e.g.*, Kevin J. Barry, *Military Commissions: American Justice on Trial*, 50 FED. LAW. 24 (2003); Frederick Borch, *Why Military Commissions are the Proper Forum and Why Terrorists Will Have Full and Fair Trials: A Rebuttal to Military Commissions: Trying American Justice,* ARMY LAW., Nov. 2003; AM. BAR ASS'N., TASK FORCE ON TREATMENT OF ENEMY

Supreme Court has never found any military tribunal procedure unconstitutional despite tremendous variations and irregularities with tribunal procedures.[12] While the Court has occasionally asserted that some of the Bill of Rights' protections apply to military tribunals,[13] it has never explicitly held that the proceedings of any military tribunal violated Due Process or any other constitutional safeguard.[14] Rather, the only military tribunals that the Court has ever held unconstitutional were those tribunals in which the military lacked jurisdiction to prosecute either the person or the offense charged. Given that the Court's only constitutional restraints on military tribunals involved jurisdictional declarations, it is surprising that there is such limited research on the limits that the Constitution places on the jurisdiction of military courts.

COMBATANTS: REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES (2003). The federal district court cases concerning the Guantanamo detainees have focused on Due Process of the military commissions. *See e.g.*, *Hamdan*, 344 F. Supp. at 185 ("It is obvious beyond the need for citation that such a dramatic deviation . . . could not be countenanced in any American court . . . but it is not necessary to consider whether Hamdan can rely on any American constitutional notions of fairness."); *In re Guantanamo* Detainee Cases, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1236, *6-7 (D.D.C. 2005).

[12] The two most recent examples of military tribunals with irregular procedures are *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1 (1942) and *In re* Yamashita, 327 U.S. 1 (1946). However, the Court has consistently upheld military tribunals even with very irregular proceedings. *See, e.g.*, Swaim v. United States, 165 U.S. 553 (1897).

[13] *See, e.g.*, Weiss v. United States, 510 U.S. 163, 195 (1994) (Ginsberg, J., concurring) (stating "A member of the Armed Forces is entitled to equal justice under law not as conceived by the generosity of a commander but as written in the Constitution.").

[14] *See, e.g.*, Fredric Lederer & Frederick Borch, *Does the Forth Amendment Apply to the Armed Forces?*, 3 WM. & MARY BILL OF RTS. J. 219, 220 (1994) ("Although the Supreme Court has assumed that most of the Bill of Rights does apply, it has yet to squarely hold it applicable."); Weiss v. United States, 510 U.S. 163, 177-78 (1994) (holding that military due process test is whether the factors supporting a Soldier's position "are so extraordinarily weighty as to overcome the balance struck by Congress."); Reid v. Covert, 354 U.S. 1, 37 (1957) (stating "as yet it has not been clearly settled to what extent the Bill of Rights and other protective parts of the Constitution apply to military trials"); Whelchel v. MacDonald, 340 U.S. 122, 127 (1950) (holding that in a courts-martial there is no right to trial by jury). In 1960, the Court of Military Appeals held that the Bill of Rights are applicable at courts-martial. *See* United States v. Jacoby, 29 C.M.R. 244 (C.M.A. 1960) (holding that the Bill of Rights apply to Soldiers unless explicitly or implicitly limited). However, this ruling is not binding on other military tribunals and has never been explicitly held by the Supreme Court.

This article is to identify who and what can be constitutionally prosecuted by military courts. Answering this question requires an analysis of how the Supreme Court has constitutionally defined the jurisdiction of military courts. Part II defines and describes the four different types of military tribunals. It explains the basis for military tribunals under the Constitution and how these tribunals relate to other federal courts. Part III examines the relationship between the Supreme Court and military tribunals. This section also identifies how the Supreme Court uses collateral and direct review to define the jurisdiction of military tribunals. Part IV details the use of military tribunals through American history. It reviews the statutory support for military tribunals, their use by military authorities, and Supreme Court cases examining the constitutional boundaries of military tribunal jurisdiction. After reviewing the Supreme Court's military jurisdiction cases, Part V critiques the Supreme Court's interpretive methodology of originalism in limiting the jurisdiction of military courts. This section argues that the Court's use of originalism—relying on historical practice and the text of the Constitution—has led to arbitrary and illogical results that provide no meaningful distinction between military tribunals and constitutional courts. More importantly, Part V argues that the Court's reliance on originalism prevents development of a more effective methodology that could provide guidance on whether the current military commissions are constitutional. Part VI advocates an alternative methodology known as translation theory, which seeks to determine the Constitution's original meaning in a modern context. It advocates translation theory as a way to reconcile previous Supreme Court precedent and provide a superior method of defining the boundaries of military courts in accordance with the U.S. Constitution. Finally, Part VII returns to the scenarios presented in this Introduction

and applies translation theory to these contemporary problems. It concludes that under the translation model, *Hamdan's* trial by military commission is unconstitutional.

II. Military Tribunals

A. The Relation Between Article III Courts & Military Tribunals

Article III of the United States Constitution establishes an independent and impartial judiciary to decide all cases and controversies of the United States. Article III, Section 1 proclaims:

> The judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in office.[15]

In drafting Article III, the Founding Fathers provided federal judges with lifetime tenure and fixed salaries in order to ensure an impartial judicial branch independent from Legislative and Executive control.[16] The Framers viewed an independent federal judiciary as essential to maintaining the separation of powers inherent in the Constitutional structure.[17] Moreover,

---

[15] U.S. CONST. art. III, § 1.

[16] *See, e.g.*, THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE para. 11 (U.S. 1776) (citing the fact that King George III "made Judges dependant on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries" among the list of grievances).

[17] *See e.g.*, THE FEDERALIST PAPERS NO. 78, at 433-34; No. 79 at 440 (Alexander Hamilton) (Clinton Rossiter ed., 1961).

the Framers wanted to ensure that these independent courts (known as constitutional courts) were given the entire judicial power of the United States government. As such, Article III, Section 2 directed that constitutional courts preside over "all cases . . . arising under this Constitution [and] laws of the United States."[18]

While the literal language of Article III mandates that constitutional courts hear all cases involving federal law, non-Article III courts have adjudicated certain federal issues throughout America's history.[19] The Supreme Court has upheld the existence of non-Article III courts in some instances,[20] while declaring their use impermissible and unconstitutional in other circumstances.[21] While Article III certainly places some limitation on the use of non-Article III federal courts, there remains considerable controversy as to what those precise limitations are.[22] It is generally agreed, however, that military tribunals are separate from Article III constitutional courts. Yet, if a military tribunal is not part of the federal judiciary under Article III, what exactly is it, from where does it derive its constitutional authority, and what are its boundaries?

---

[18] U.S. CONST. art. III, § 2. Article III, Section Two enumerates the jurisdiction of federal courts.

[19] *See, e.g.*, Richard H. Fallon, *Of Legislative Courts, Administrative Agencies, and Article III*, 101 HARV. L. REV. 915, 919 (1988) (noting that the first Congress tasked executive officials with resolving issues like veterans benefits that might have been vested in Article III courts).

[20] *See, e.g.*, American Ins. Co. v. Canter, 26 U.S. (1 Pet.) 511 (1828) (upholding the constitutionality of territorial courts); Murray's Lessee v. Hoboken Land & Improvement Co., 59 U.S. (18 How.) 272 (1856) (upholding the constitutionality of public rights courts); Dynes v. Hoover, 61 U.S. (20 How.) 65 (1858) (upholding the constitutionality of military courts-martial).

[21] *See, e.g.*, Crowell v. Benson, 285 U.S. 22 (1932) (declaring that private rights cases must be heard in constitutional courts); Northern Pipeline Constr. Co. v. Marathon Pipe Line Co., 458 U.S. 50 (1982) (holding that the bankruptcy court established by Congress was unconstitutional).

[22] HART AND WECHSLER'S THE FEDERAL COURTS AND THE FEDERAL SYSTEM 43 (Richard H. Fallon, Jr. et al. eds., 4th ed. 1996).

B. What is a Military Tribunal?

Colonel William Winthrop—dubbed by the Supreme Court as the Blackstone of military law[23]—provided the classic definition of military law:

> Military law in its ordinary and more restricted sense is the specific law governing the Army as a separate community. In a wider sense, it includes also that law, which, operative only in time of war or like emergency, regulates the relations of enemies and authorizes military government and martial law.[24]

Winthrop broadly defined a military tribunal as both a commander's tool for maintaining order and discipline[25] and a wartime court used to punish war crimes and maintain order during armed conflict and military occupation.[26] This definition posits four main types of military tribunals:

> 1) Military Justice Court—A court established to punish members of the Armed forces for violations of a code that governs them;

> 2) Law of War Court—A court established to prosecute individuals accused of violating the law of war (commonly called "war crimes");

[23] *See* Reid v. Covert, 354 U.S. 1, 19, n.38 (1957).

[24] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1 at 15.

[25] *Id.* at 54; *see also* Frederick B. Wiener, *Courts-Martial and the Bill of Rights: the Original Practice*, 72 HARV. L. REV. 1 (1958); Timothy C. MacDonnell, *Military Commissions and Courts-Martial: A Brief Discussion of the Constitutional and Jurisdictional Distinctions Between the Two Courts*, ARMY LAW., Mar. 2002, at 19.

[26] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 831-33.

> 3) Martial Law Court—A court established to enforce law and order when martial law is imposed during times of emergency within the nation's borders and the military temporarily replaces the civil government;
>
> 4) Military Government Court—A court established when military forces occupy territory outside the United States and the occupied nation's courts are unable or unwilling to ensure law and order. [27]

Within the United States, the first type of court, designed to discipline members of the armed forces, is known as a court-martial.[28] The remaining three courts are commonly referred to as military commissions.[29]

Virtually everything written about military courts follows this broad categorization separating courts-martial analysis from discussion of military commissions.[30] Scholars have also further distinguished the types of military commissions. For example, Lieutenant Colonel John Bickers contends that the current military commissions prosecuting "law of

---

[27] *See* Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Marmon, Major Joseph Cooper & Captain William Goodman, Military Commissions 14 (1953) (unpublished L.L.M. thesis, The Judge Advocate General's School) (on file at the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, Charlottesville, Virginia) [hereinafter Marmon thesis].

[28] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 48-49.

[29] *Id.* at 832-33 (listing the three types of military commissions); *see also* Bradley & Goldsmith, *supra* note 10, at 250 (citing various authors who identify these three main purposes of military commissions). At least one author has properly noted that during the Mexican American War General Scott used military commissions for a fourth reason—to extend criminal jurisdiction to his own Soldiers serving in Mexico who were beyond the jurisdiction of American courts. Because the Articles of War included no authority to punish Soldiers for civilian offenses, General Scott convened "military commissions (a phrase he coined) to try U.S. Soldiers for civil offense not covered by the Articles of War, such as murder, rape, and robbery." Glazier, *supra* note 11, at 2028. This rationale is seldom mentioned by contemporary scholars because subsequent modifications to the Articles of War addressed this jurisdictional gap. *See id.* at note 73.

[30] *See, e.g.*, WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 45, 831 (separately defining courts-martial and military commissions); The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court separates out the topic of court martial and military commissions defining courts-martial as "judicial proceedings conducted under the control of the military, rather than civilian authority, and military commissions as "simply the will of the commanding general." THE OXFORD COMPANION TO THE SUPREME COURT, MILITARY TRIALS AND MARTIAL LAW 546 (Kermit L. Hall ed., 1992).

war" offenses are "so utterly different" from all other types of military commissions that the history of other military commissions is irrelevant in assessing the constitutionality of President Bush's current military order.[31] While categorizing military tribunals may help explain the different purposes of military tribunals,[32] it is much less helpful in identifying their constitutional boundaries. Military tribunals have taken on many different forms and names throughout history. In fact, "Court-Martial, War Court, Military Court under Martial Law, Military Court, Courts of Inquiry, Special Court Martial, and Common Law War Courts are just a few of the terms that the tribunals have been called throughout their history."[33] Confusion often results because military tribunals not only have various names and bases of authority, but also overlapping purposes.[34] Accordingly, "the distinction between the several kinds of military tribunals is at best a wavering line which tends at times to disappear."[35] Still, all military tribunals are outside of Article III constitutional courts. Defining the proper boundary between military courts and constitutional courts requires a proper analysis of *all* military tribunals, whatever their given name.

---

[31] John M. Bickers, *Military Commissions are Constitutionally Sound: A Response to Professors Katyal and Tribe*, 34 TEX. TECH. L. REV. 899, 902 (2003).

[32] *See id.* (claiming this confusion has led to a "lasting befuddlement of numerous lawyers, military and civilian alike").

[33] Michael O. Lacey, *Military Commissions, A Historical Perspective*, ARMY LAW., Mar. 2002, at 42.

[34] For example, military commissions were used by General Scott to try American Soldiers in Mexican War, *see* Glazier, *supra* note 11. Similarly, courts martial have been used to try civilians who were not part of the armed forces, *see* Reid v. Covert, 354 U.S. 1, 3 (1957) (holding that a courts-martial lacks jurisdiction over a military dependent family member).

[35] Marmon Thesis, *supra* note 27, at 13-14. Although many scholars attempt to separate out the different military tribunals Lieutenant Colonel Marmom does an excellent job of demonstrating why this is not really possible. For example, he states that law of war courts and military government courts "are not so distinct as they appear." *Id.* at 18. He goes on to state that different types of military commissions "are so interlocked that nearly every attempt to deal with them discusses both in a single breath" and cites numerous authority to prove his point. *Id.* at n.3. Despite this acknowledgement, LTC Marmon's thesis attempts to address military commissions while excluding the topics of courts-martial and martial law courts as much as possible.

C. Constitutional Authority of Military Tribunals

America regularly used courts-martial prior to the Constitution.[36] However, because "Congress, and the President, like the courts possess no power not derived from the Constitution,"[37] the use of any military tribunal since the Constitution's adoption in 1789 is limited by the government's constitutional authority to convene them. Article I, section 8, clause 14 of the Constitution gives Congress the power "to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces."[38] This express authority, along with Congress' authority under the Necessary and Proper clause,[39] empowered Congress to continue establishing military courts-martial separate and distinct from constitutional courts.[40] Indeed, in 1789, following the Constitution's ratification, and based on this Article I authority, Congress explicitly adopted the then-existing Articles of War.[41] Using Article I, Congress has repeatedly modified the nature and procedures of courts-martial by amending the Articles of War, and subsequently the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).[42] Article I also

[36] *See, e.g.*, WINTHROP *supra* note 1, at 17 (noting the Articles of War and courts-martial "predate the Constitution being derived from those adopted by the Constitutional Congress in 1775 and 1776.").

[37] *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1, 25 (1942).

[38] U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 14.

[39] *Id.*, cl. 18 (granting Congress the power "To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers.").

[40] Dynes v. Hoover, 64 US (20 How.) 65, 79 (1858) (holding that Congress' plenary power to establish courts martial is "entirely independent" of Article III); *see also* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 17 (stating the Articles of War are enacted by Congress in exercise of their constitutional authority to "make rules for the government and regulation of the land forces."); Walter T. Cox III, *The Army, The Courts, and the Constitution: The Evolution of Military Justice*, 118 MIL. L. REV. 1, 4 (1987).

[41] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 23.

[42] Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C §§ 801-946 (2000) [hereinafter UCMJ (2002)].

gives Congress the authority to "declare War"[43] and "to define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations."[44] By its plain language, the Constitution vests Congress with authority to create military commissions in order to prosecute war crimes, and to establish martial law and military government courts.[45]

The Constitution's clear language makes it unsurprising that early military law scholars argued that Congress had the sole authority to grant military courts jurisdiction over individuals or offenses. Major Alexander Macomb, author of the first American treatise on military law, stated that military jurisdiction extended only over those persons Congress explicitly included in the Articles of War.[46] However, while Congress repeatedly defined the rules and regulations governing the armed forces in establishing courts-martial, Congress rarely codified any offenses against the law of nations or established any rules for military commissions.[47] Rather than proceeding from a statutory grant, military commissions have

[43] U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 11.

[44] *Id.*, cl. 10; *cf. id.*, cl. 1 ("The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States."); *see also* David J. Bederman, *Article II Courts*, 44 MERCER L. REV. 835, 827 (1994) (discussing the authority to convene military tribunals based on these two different clauses). While there have been occasionally military courts used to resolve civil law issues, the focus of this paper is on criminal trials.

[45] *See, e.g.*, MacDonnell, *supra* note 25, at 20 (stating there is little question that "Congress could . . . establish a military commission.").

[46] *See* ALEXANDER MACOMB, A TREATISE ON MARTIAL LAW, AND COURTS-MARTIAL 19-20 (1809); *see also* WILLIAM C. DE HART, OBSERVATIONS ON MILITARY LAW AND THE CONSTITUTION AND PRACTICE OF COURTS MARTIAL 36 (1846) (stating that only positive action by Congress can subject someone to military jurisdiction); Glazier, *supra* note 11, at 2027 (citing various early authorities for this same proposition).

[47] During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress made it a crime to spy for the British by explicitly granting court-martial jurisdiction over enemy spies. *See* Resolution of the Continental Congress, Aug. 21, 1776, in 1 JOURNALS OF THE AMERICAN CONGRESS: FROM 1774 TO 1778, at 450 (1823). This statute was used to try Major John Andre and his accomplice Joshua Hett Smith. The fact that Major Andre's trial was called a court of inquiry while Joshua Smith's trial was a special court martial illustrates how frequently the names for

evolved as common law courts of necessity, used "as a pragmatic gap filler, allowing justice to be served on persons not directly subject to [courts-martial] such as citizens in territory under military government and enemy belligerents accused of improper conduct through a 'common law' application of the laws of war."[48] While the President and military commanders occasionally used military commissions without explicit congressional approval,[49] it remains unclear whether such military commissions are constitutional.

Article II of the Constitution makes the "President [the] Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States."[50] Thus, it is often asserted that the President has an independent and inherent authority to convene all types of military tribunals. Winthrop maintained that a court-martial was merely a tool that Congress gave the President in order to assist him in maintaining good order and discipline.[51] Many, including Winthrop, contend that military commissions are just one tool at the commander-in-chief's disposal, given his inherent authority to successfully wage war.[52] In fact, the President and his subordinate military commanders have frequently used military commissions during armed conflict

---

military trials were interchanged. *See* Marmon Thesis, *supra* note 27, at 4. Congress also specifically authorized military commissions with the Reconstruction Acts following the Civil War. *See* Act on March 2, 1867, § 3 and 4, reprinted in WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 848; *see also id.* at 853 (discussing the authority of these military commissions).

[48] Glazier, *supra* note 11, at 2010.

[49] *See* Part IV *infra*.

[50] U.S. CONST. art. II, § 2, cl. 1.

[51] *See* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 48-49.

[52] *See id.* at 831 (stating Congress "has left it to the President, and the military commanders representing him, to employ the commission, as occasion may require, for the investigation and punishment of offenses against the law of war and other offences not cognizable by court-martial."); *see also* Marmon thesis, *supra* note 27, at 10-11 (citing Attorney General Speed's view and Army Judge Advocate General Crowder's view that war courts were borne out of necessity and usage).

without congressional approval.[53] While Congress has generally refused to define statutorily military commissions, it has frequently passed statutes recognizing the President's authority to implement these commissions during times of war.[54] This congressional acquiescence to the President during times of war leaves unclear the constitutionality of presidential efforts to convene military tribunals on his own accord.[55]

Some scholars attempt to link a specific branch of government (the Legislative or the Executive) with specific authority to convene a particular type of military tribunal. For example, Professor David Bederman argues that while Congress has the power to convene courts-martial and law of war courts, martial law and military occupation courts emanate solely from the President's authority as Commander in Chief.[56] However, history demonstrates the difficulty of precisely limiting the authority to convene a specific type of military court by either Congress or the President. The prevailing view is that that the power to create a military tribunal . . . "lie[s] at the constitutional crossroads [because] both Congress and the President have authority in this area."[57] By whatever name, all three

---

[53] *See* Part IV *infra*.

[54] *See id.* (discussing Article 15 of the 1916 Articles of War and subsequently Article 21 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

[55] Because the Supreme Court has rarely addressed this issue it remains an open question. Some object to looking solely to the Supreme Court in determining the President's authority under the Constitution in wartime. For example, when examining the constitutionality of Lincoln's use of military commissions Clinton Rossiter wrote "the law of the Constitution is what Lincoln did in the crisis, not what the Court said later." CLINTON ROSSITER & RICHARD P. LONGAKER, THE SUPREME COURT AND THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF 39 (2d ed. 1976). Yet, even Rossiter acknowledges that Lincoln's use of military commissions was "the most dubious and judicially assailable" of all of Lincoln's executive practices, and states that the use of military commissions in Indiana was "it must be agreed, plainly unconstitutional." *Id.* at 26, 36. His point merely underscores the Supreme Court's difficulty in acting to actually constrain Executive action.

[56] Bederman, *supra* note 44, at 838.

[57] MacDonnell, *supra* note 25, at 19, 20. *See also* JONATHON LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE 9 (1993).

military tribunals derive their constitutional authority from one of three places: Congress's power under Article I; the President's power pursuant to Article II; or Congress and the President's joint authority derived from both Articles I and II of the United States Constitution.

D. Jurisdiction of Military Tribunals

Jurisdiction is "the power and authority of a court to decide a matter in controversy."[58] Therefore, defining the jurisdiction of military tribunals involves determining when a military court has the "power to try and determine a case."[59] In order for a military tribunal to have jurisdiction, like any court, it must have "jurisdiction over the person being tried and the subject matter in issue."[60] Determining when a military tribunal, rather than a constitutional court has jurisdiction to try a case is an exceedingly difficult task: while the Constitution does not explicitly sanction the use of military tribunals (or any non-Article III court), they have been used throughout history and are at least implicitly recognized in the Constitution.[61]

[58] BLACKS LAW DICTIONARY 852 (6th Ed. 1990).

[59] RICHARD C. DAHL & JOHN F. WHELAN, THE MILITARY LAW DICTIONARY 89 (1960).

[60] MacDonnell, *supra* note 25 at 25.

[61] *See supra* notes 19-22 and accompanying text. The Constitution implicitly recognizes military tribunals in the Fifth Amendment, where it states, "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger." U.S. CONST. amend V.

In practice, both congressional statutes and unwritten common law have limited the jurisdiction of military tribunals. By publishing the Articles of War, and subsequently, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Congress codified who can be tried for what offense at military court-martial.[62] However, Congress has not codified the jurisdiction of military commissions and instead has authorized their jurisdiction "against offenders or offenses that by the law of war may be triable by military commissions."[63] The President often relies on his inherent authority and this congressional legislation to use military commissions to prosecute people and offenses consistent with historical practice and international law.[64] While these factors help define the jurisdiction of military courts, neither congressional statute, nor historical practice, nor international law, can extend the jurisdiction of a military court beyond the limits of the Constitution. Therefore, the Constitution provides the ultimate limitation on the jurisdiction of military tribunals.[65] However, universal agreement that Article III of the Constitution limits the jurisdiction of military tribunals does not equal

[62] MacDonnell, *supra* note 25 at 26. The current UCMJ includes Articles 2, 5, 17, and 18, which establish personal jurisdiction, and Articles 18-20 which define the subject matter jurisdiction. *See* LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE, *supra* note 57, at 4-8; WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 17 (noting that both the Articles of War and courts-martial "predate the Constitution being derived from those adopted by the Constitutional Congress in 1775 and 1776.").

[63] *See, e.g.*, Act of June 4, 1920, ch. 227, art. 15, 41 Stat. 790 (1921). For a full discussion see *infra* Part IV.B-D.

[64] *See* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 831-33 (supporting the commander's inherent authority without Congressional approval); *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1 (1942) (upholding the president's authority based on Congressional legislation).

[65] Recognizing this obvious principle, Secretary of War Henry Knox noted "the change in the Government of the United States will require the articles of war be revised and adopted to the Constitution." Wiener, *supra* note 25, at 4. Similarly, in ratifying the Article of War Congress simply adapted the Articles of War as they existed prior to the Constitution "as far as the same may be applicable to the constitution of the United States." Act of April 30, 1790, ch 10, Sec 13, I Stat. 121.

agreement on who determines the boundaries of military tribunals. Specifically unresolved is the Supreme Court's role in determining the jurisdiction of military courts.

III. Judicial Review of Military Tribunals

A. Collateral Review of Military Tribunals

Under America's system of judicial review, the United States Supreme Court is the final arbiter of the Constitution.[66] Because military tribunals are federal tribunals that are not part of the Judiciary under Article III of the Constitution, initially there was great uncertainty about whether civilian courts had legal purview over military courts.[67] Historically, military courts were not subject to direct review from any constitutional court.[68] Having no direct appellate review over military tribunals, civilian courts would review a military tribunal decision when a petitioner sought relief from a military court action by some form of collateral attack.[69] Before the Civil War there were very few collateral challenges of military court actions brought to the federal judiciary.[70] The only collateral challenges to reach the

---

[66] *See* Marbury v. Madison, 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) 137 (1802) ("it is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say whet the law is."). For historical background information on *Marbury* and its progeny, see ROBERT MCCLOSKEY, THE AMERICAN SUPREME COURT 36-44 (1960).

[67] LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE, *supra* note 57, at 29.

[68] *See* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 50. Much of the collateral review of military courts actually occurred in state court until 1871 when the U.S. Supreme Court limited that venue. *See, e.g., Tarble's Case*, 80 U.S. (13 Wall.) 397 (1871); *Ableman v. Booth*, 62 U.S. 506 (1859). Moreover, virtually all of the remaining cases were originally heard in federal district courts or the federal court of claims.

[69] *See* WINTHROP *supra* note 1, at 51.

[70] Richard D. Rosen, *Civilian Courts and the Military Justice System: Collateral Review of Courts-Martial*, 108 MIL L. REV. 20 (1985).

Supreme Court during that time were lawsuits seeking to recover damages from fines imposed at military courts-martial.[71] When these cases arose, a constitutional court would determine whether the military court exceeded its authority.[72]

Collateral claims take many forms, such as suits for back pay, injunctive relief, and writs for mandamus but the most prevalent ones were appeals for the writ of *habeas corpus*.[73] Although *habeas* claims ultimately became commonplace, the Civil War was the first time a *habeas* petition from a military court reached the Supreme Court.[74] The writ of *habeas corpus* protects individuals from unlawful restraint and detention by the Executive.[75] The right to *habeas corpus* existed in both British and American common law and received explicit protection in the Constitution, which forbid suspension of "the Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus . . . unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may Require it."[76] The first Congress extended the right of *habeas corpus* to federal courts in the Judiciary Act of 1789.[77] Section 14 of that act authorized federal courts to issue the writ of *habeas corpus* to prisoners "in custody, under or by colour of the authority of the United

---

[71] *Id.* at 20.

[72] *See* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 53; Dynes v. Hoover, 61 U.S. (20 How.) 65 (1858).

[73] *See* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 19-20; *see* Cox, *supra* note 40, at 20 (1987).

[74] *See Ex parte* Vallandigham 68 U.S. (1 Wall.) 243 (1864); *Ex parte* Milligan, 71 U.S. (4 Wall.) 2 (1866). The first court-martial to reach the Supreme Court was *Ex parte* Reed, 100 U.S. 13 (1879).

[75] *See* INS v. St. Cyr, 533 U.S. 289, 301 (2001) ("At its historical core, the writ of habeas corpus has served as a means of reviewing the legality of executive detention."); *see also* Roberto Iraola, *Enemy Combatants, the Courts, and the Constitution*, 56 OKLA. L. REV. 565, 580 (2003) (detailing both the history and purpose of *habeas corpus*).

[76] U.S. CONST. art. I, § 9, cl. 2.

[77] Act of Sept. 24, 1789, ch 20. § 14, 1 Stat. 82. (1789).

States, or committed for trial before some court of the same."[78] The current statutory authority implementing this constitutional right authorizes federal courts to hear a *habeas* petition from any person who claims to be held "in violation of the Constitution or laws or treaties of the United States."[79]

B. Direct Review of Military Tribunals

Thanks to the writ of *habeas corpus* and other forms of collateral relief, the Supreme Court has always exercised some form of review over military tribunals after military cases went through the appropriate district and appellate courts. Over the last half century, civilian review of military courts has gradually expanded. In 1950, Congress passed the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).[80] Article 67 of the UCMJ created the Court of Military Appeals to review the decisions of military courts-martial. (This appellate court has changed names throughout its history and is currently referred to as the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces "(CAAF"). While CAAF provides civilian review over courts-martial, Congress chose to make CAAF an Article I court, denying these judges the protections of lifetime tenure and fixed salaries of Article III judges.[81] Although CAAF provides

[78] *Id.*

[79] 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241(c)(3) (2000).

[80] *See* Act of May 5, 1950, ch. 169, 39 Stat. 619 (1950). For a detailed history and background of the UCMJ see F. Edward Barker, *Military Law-A Separate System of Jurisprudence,* 36 UNIV. OF CINN. L. REV. 223 (1967)*;* Edmund Morgan, *The Background of the Uniform Code of Military Justice,* 6 VAND. L. REV. 169 (1953).

[81] *See* Cox, *supra* note 40, at 14-17. While there was initially some question about whether or not the CAAF was a "court" or an "executive agency," in 1968 Congress eliminated any doubt by stating explicitly that CAAF would be known as a court created under Article I of the Constitution. *See* Act of June 15, 1968, Pub. L. No. 90-340, 82 Stat. 179. It is interesting to note that in 1983, as part of the Military Justice Act Congress

significant civilian oversight over courts-martial and is instrumental in the development of military law,[82] it is not a constitutional court, and does not provide independent Article III review over military tribunals. In 1983, however, Congress amended Article 67 of the UCMJ to include some Article III review by granting the Supreme Court the power to issue a writ of *certiorari* over courts-martial decisions decided by CAAF.[83] Even with this narrow expansion allowing for direct review by the Supreme Court, the effect of the writ of *certiorari* on military courts has been limited. The Supreme Court has used the writ sparingly throughout its 20 plus year history.[84] Finally, Congress' statutory grant of power to the Supreme Court for direct review applies only to military courts-martial and does not apply to other military tribunals.[85] Thus, except for courts-martial, *habeas corpus* petitions and other forms of collateral attack remain the primary method for obtaining constitutional court review over military tribunals.

---

established a commission to make improvements to military justice. One of the committee's recommendations was to make CAAF an Article III court. *See* The Military-Justice Act of 1983 Advisory Commission Report 9 (1984). This recommendation was never implemented.

[82] For a thorough, detailed, and heavily annotated analysis of the history of the Court of Military Appeals see Johnathon Lurie's superb two-volume work: JONATHON LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE (1993); and JONATHON LURIE, PURSUING MILITARY JUSTICE (1998). Professor Lurie has also written a more accessible one volume work, JONATHON LURIE, MILITARY JUSTICE IN AMERICA: THE U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE ARMED FORCES, 1775-1980 (2001).

[83] Military Justice Act of 1983, Pub. L. No 98-209, § 10, 97 Stat. 1393, 1405-06 (codified at 28 U.S.C. § 1259 (2000)).

[84] *See* Eugene R. Fidell, *Review of Decisions of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces by the Supreme Court of the United States*, *in* EVOLVING MILITARY JUSTICE 149 (Eugene R. Fidell & Dwight H. Sullivan, eds., 2002) (noting that the Court only granted the writ of *certiorari* to courts-martial 10 times in its 20 year history, and has rarely, if ever, granted relief for a defendant); *see also* SUPREME COURT PRACTICE 84 (Robert L. Stern, et. al. eds., 7th ed. 1993) (stating "since the Supreme Court acquired certiorari jurisdiction over military cases in 1984, the Court has received more than 200 certiorari petitions . . . through the end of its 1993 Term, the Court had granted only five.").

[85] It appears that under the Military Justice Act neither CAAF nor the Supreme Court have judicial review over military tribunals. *See* The Military Justice Act of 1983, Pub. L. No 98-209, § 10, 97 Stat. 1393, 1405-06 (codified at 28 U.S.C. § 1259 (2000). *But see* Glazier, *supra* note 11, at 2075 (arguing that the broad language in that Act could be construed as applying to military commissions as well).

C. Jurisdiction: The Supreme Court's Test for Military Tribunals

Even though federal courts have always been vested with some power to review military tribunals, "the relationship between [military courts] and the regular federal courts is extremely tenuous."[86] In practice, the federal courts, and in particular the Supreme Court, are extremely reluctant to review the proceedings of military courts due to the fact that military courts comprise an entirely separate system of justice.[87] In fact, throughout most of American history, the Supreme Court consistently held that constitutional courts could not review the merits of any military tribunal decision.[88] Rather, in *Dynes v. Hoover*, the Supreme Court specifically limited civilian court review to the technical jurisdiction of a military court.[89] Indeed, for the first 150 years of American history, federal court review of military courts was predicated on "the single inquiry, the test [for] jurisdiction."[90] Judge Nott articulated one of the clearest and earliest statements of the scope of constitutional court review over military tribunals in *Swaim v. United States*:[91]

[86] ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 103.

[87] *Id.* at 103.

[88] *See* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at n.9 (listing the long line of cases and numerous law review articles supporting this proposition).

[89] 61 U.S. (20 How) 65, 81-82 (1858). *Dynes* is regarded as the seminal case limiting civilian court review of military tribunals. It held: "When the sentences of courts-martial which have been convened regularly and have proceeded legally, and by which punishments are directed, not forbidden by law, or which are according to the laws and customs of the sea, civil courts have nothing to do, nor are they in any way alterable by them." *Id.* at 82. *See also* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 21-22.

[90] United States v. Grimley, 137 U.S. 147, 150 (1890).

[91] 28 Ct. Cls. 173, 217 (1893).

> The proceedings of these military tribunals cannot be reviewed in the civil courts. No writ of error will lie to bring up the rulings of a [military court]. When the record of a [military court] comes into civilian court in a collateral way, the only questions which can be considered may be reduced to these three: First, was the [military court] legally constituted; second, did it have jurisdiction of the case; third, was the sentence duly approved and authorized by law.[92]

In determining the constitutionality of military tribunals, federal courts examine both subject matter jurisdiction and personal jurisdiction.[93] Subject matter jurisdiction requires a military tribunal to have the legal authority to try the offense charged,[94] and over the years federal courts have looked at many different in so determining. For example, federal courts examined whether an offense was a war crime,[95] took place in a geographic area where military courts had authority,[96] or was committed during time of war or occupation.[97] Similarly, federal courts heard challenges to the personal jurisdiction of military courts from individuals claiming that they were not properly subject to military tribunals. These challenges came from "civilians, discharged military prisoners, reservists, deserters, and service members held beyond the term of their enlistments and other unlawful enlistment

---

[92] ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 104, *citing* Swaim v. U.S., 28 Ct. Cls. 173, 217 (1893).

[93] *See* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 31-33. As Colonel Rosen correctly points out, the Court also defines technical jurisdiction to include two other factors it will review: whether a military tribunal was lawfully convened and constituted, and whether the sentence was duly approved and authorized by law. *See id* at 34-35. These two areas deal mainly with statutory issues such as whether court-martial or other military court complied with the Article of War. Generally, these questions are not relevant in defining the constitutional relationship between military courts and Article III courts. As such, these two areas are given minimal attention in this article.

[94] *See* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 31.

[95] *See e.g.*, *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1 (1942).

[96] *See* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 31-32.

[97] *Id.*

claims such as being a minority, overage, a non citizen, or a deserter from previous services."[98]

Despite this longstanding view that constitutional courts could review only the *jurisdiction* of military courts, the Supreme Court modestly expanded the scope of federal court review in 1953. In *Burns v. Wilson*,[99] the petitioner did not assert jurisdictional error. Instead, he claimed that "gross irregularities and unlawful practices rendered the trial and conviction invalid."[100] Breaking with earlier case-law, the Supreme Court asserted that in addition to determining the jurisdiction of military courts-martial, federal courts could also review constitutional questions if the military court failed to deal "fully and fairly" with the constitutional claim.[101] In *Burns*, the Supreme Court held "it is the limited function of the civil courts to determine whether the military has given fair consideration to each of these claims," but determined that the military court had done so in that particular case.[102]

Since *Burns* the Supreme Court has given very little guidance on how to apply this test.[103] Thus this assertion of the right of federal courts to review constitutional issues has been a largely empty gesture. In fact, the Supreme Court has never declared any procedure, practice, or rule of a military tribunal unconstitutional. While the Court continues to follow

[98] *Id.* at 32-33.

[99] 346 U.S. 137 (1953).

[100] Burns v. Lovett, 104 F. Supp. 312, 313 (D.D.C. 1952).

[101] Burns v. Wilson, 346 U.S. 137, 144 (1953).

[102] *Id.* at 144.

[103] *See* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 7.

Burns and assert that constitutional protections apply to military courts,[104] the Court has never found any such constitutional violation.[105] The only constitutional limitations the Supreme Court has ever placed on military tribunals are lack of personal or subject matter jurisdiction. Based on this history, it is unlikely the Supreme Court will strike down the procedure of a military tribunal in the foreseeable future. If the Supreme Court is going to place any constitutional limitations on military tribunals, it will likely do so, as it has throughout history, by further limiting the jurisdiction of military tribunals.

The nature of collateral review requires subordinate courts to review military tribunals before reaching the United States Supreme Court.[106] Although there is a wealth of history and persuasive analysis provided in various lower court opinions, this article focuses only on decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court because it is the final interpreter of the Constitution and its decisions are binding on both Congress and the President.[107] Part IV examines the history of military tribunals and how the United States Supreme Court has defined the jurisdiction of these military tribunals.

---

[104] *See e.g.*, Parker v. Levy, 417 U.S. 733, 758 (1974) ("While the members of the military are not excluded from the protection granted by the First Amendment, the different character of the military community and of the military mission requires a different application of those protections."); Weiss v. United States, 510 U.S. 163, 195 (1994). In actuality, the Court has never directly asserted that constitutional protections apply to military commissions and has even upheld the use of military commissions in some instances with very irregular procedures. *See, e.g.*, *In re* Yamashita, 327 U.S. 1 (1946).

[105] *See supra* note 14 and accompanying text.

[106] Prior to the Civil War state courts collaterally reviewed federal courts-martial decisions. In 1871, the Supreme Court held that state courts lacked the power to review federal *habeas* actions and eliminated state court review of federal military tribunals. *See, e.g.*, *Tarble's Case*, 80 U.S. (13 Wall.) 397 (1871).

[107] For a good primer on state and federal court decisions, see generally Rosen, *supra* note 70.

IV. Military Tribunals and Supreme Court Review Throughout American History

A. Military Tribunals from the Revolution to the Civil War

1. Authority and Use of Military Tribunals 1775-1861

Although early colonists fighting under the British flag were subject to the British courts-martial system, the Continental Congress provided for the first purely national American military tribunals by publishing the 1775 Articles of War.[108] The 1775 Articles of War set forth sixty-nine articles to regulate the procedure and punishment of federal Soldiers, based heavily on the existing code of the British Army.[109] In 1776, the Continental Congress passed a statute explicitly subjecting spies to capital punishment under the Articles of War.[110] Because General George Washington found the 1775 Articles of War insufficient,[111] Congress established a committee comprised of Thomas Jefferson, John Rutledge, James Wilson, and R.R. Livingston to expand the existing Articles of War.[112] The Continental

[108] *See* Articles of War of 1775, *reprinted in* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 953. For a thorough history of the evolution of the Articles of War, *see id.* at 21-24. Prior to passage of the UCMJ, the Army was governed by the Articles of War, and the Navy was governed by a separate code known as Articles for Government of the Navy. When discussing military law statutes prior to the UCMJ, this Article refers to the Articles of War because it was the law that effected the largest military population. Additionally, while the Rules for the Navy are still subject to the Constitution, the "law of the high seas has always been steeped in ancient traditions." John F. O'Connor, *Don't Know Much about History: The Constitution, Historical Practice, and the Death Penalty Jurisdiction of Courts Martial*, 52 U. MIAMI L. REV. 177, 193 (1997). For a history of the naval justice system, see *id.* at 191-96.

[109] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 22.

[110] *Id.* at 22. Congress ordered that the Act of August 21 1776, which criminalized spying be "printed at the end of the rules and articles of war." *Id.*

[111] *See* LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE, *supra* note 57, at 4.

[112] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 22.

Congress adopted these revised Articles of War on September 20, 1776,[113] expanding the power of military tribunals, especially the punishments that courts-martial could impose.[114] Following victory in the Revolutionary War and ratification of the Constitution, Congress adopted the 1776 Articles of War "as far as the same may be applicable to the constitution of the United States."[115] Congress passed a complete revision of the Articles of War in 1806, recognizing the need to draft a new code to comply with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.[116] This Code remained intact without significant modification throughout the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Civil War, until 1874.[117]

By passing the Articles of War in 1775, America's Founding Fathers empowered Congress to define who and what could be subject to military tribunal rather than relying on the discretion of military commanders.[118] In accordance with the Articles of War, General

---

[113] *See* Articles of War of 1776, *reprinted in* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 961.

[114] *See* Articles of War of 1776, *reprinted in* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 961. While the 1775 Articles only allowed the death penalty for 3 offenses, the 1776 Articles allowed it for 16 different offenses. Under the 1776 Articles the offenses punishable by death were mutiny and sedition (2, art. 3); failure to suppress mutiny and sedition (2,art. 4); striking a superior officer in the execution of his duties (2, art. 5); desertion (6, art. 1); sleeping on post (13, art. 6); causing a false alarm in camp (13, art. 9); causing violence to persons bringing provisions into camp (13, art. 11); misbehavior before the enemy (13, art. 13); casting away arms or ammunition (13, art. 14); disclosing the watch-word (13, art. 15); forcing a safeguard (13, art. 17); aiding the enemy (13, art. 18); correspondence with the enemy (13, art. 19); abandoning post in search of plunder (13, art. 21); and subordinate compelling surrender (13, art. 22). *Id.*; *see also* O'Connor, *supra* note 108 (discussing the history of capital punishment in the military).

[115] Act of April 30, 1790, ch. 10, § 13, 1 Stat. 121. In 1789, Congress adopted the 1776 Articles of War. *See* Act of Sept. 29, 1789, ch. 25, § 4, 1 Stat. 96. The next year Congress added the phrase "as far as the same may be applicable to the constitution of the United States."

[116] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 23; s*ee also* Louis Fisher, *Military Tribunals: Historical Patterns and Lessons*, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE 4 (2004). Fisher cites Representative Barnum who reminded the House that the rules and regulations for the army needed to be revised to meet the changes of a Constitutional government).

[117] *See* Cox, *supra* note 40, at 6; WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 22.

[118] Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 4.

Washington court-martialed numerous Soldiers for desertion and other congressionally specified offenses.[119] Consistent with congressional legislation, in addition to convening courts-martial General Washington convened military tribunals against people accused of spying for the British. The most notable of those trials was Major John Andre's trial in 1780.[120] Major Andre was captured in civilian clothes carrying the plans of the West Point defense fortifications he allegedly received from General Benedict Arnold.[121] Washington ordered Major Andre charged as a spy before a military tribunal called a Court of Inquiry.[122] Despite his protestations,[123] The Court judged Andre to be guilty and recommend he be put to death by hanging.[124]

While Congress made few substantive changes to the Articles of War following the Revolutionary War, military leaders occasionally convened military tribunals that were outside of the authority of the Articles of War. During the War of 1812, then-General

[119] For a superb history of courts-martial in this era, *see* JAMES C. NEAGLES, SUMMER SOLDIERS, A SURVEY AND INDEX OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR COURTS-MARTIAL (1986).

[120] Wigfall Green, *The Military Commission*, 42 AM. J. INT'L L 832, 832 (1948).

[121] *See* WILLIAM S. RANDALL, BENEDICT ARNOLD: PATRIOT AND TRAITOR 867-69 (1990).

[122] Both Major Andre and his assistant Joshua Hett Smith were tried for spying, presumably under the statute passed by Congress. While Major Andre's trial was called a court of inquiry Joshua Smith's trial was called a special court-martial. *See* Green, *supra* note 120, at 833. The fact that these two men were "tried" for the same offense under military tribunals of different names demonstrates how interchangeable the names of military tribunals can be.

[123] Andre contended that he was a British soldier and thus should be sentenced to death by firing squad instead of by hanging which was generally reserved for spies. General Washington denied his request because he was captured in civilian clothes, and initially gave a false name to his captors. *See* RANDALL, *supra* note 121, at 868-69.

[124] *See id.*

Andrew Jackson placed the city of New Orleans under martial law.[125] However, after his heroic victory over the British in January 1815, General Jackson refused to terminate martial law, sparking a confrontation with New Orleans leaders.[126] During this period of tension, a state legislator, Louis Loullier, published an article in the local newspaper critical of Jackson's conduct.[127] General Jackson promptly arrested Loullier for inciting a mutiny and for spying.[128] After Loullier's arrest, a federal judge, Dominick Hall, issued a writ of *habeas corpus* ordering that Loullier be released because martial law was unjustified since the British were now in retreat. In response, Jackson arrested Judge Hall for "aiding, abetting and exciting mutiny."[129] General Jackson convened a court-martial to try Loullier for mutiny and spying. The court-martial dismissed the charges because it believed a court-martial lacked jurisdiction over Loullier, a civilian under the Articles of War, and that it was unlikely a spy would publish his views in a local newspaper.[130] Dissatisfied with the result and unlikely to secure a conviction against Judge Hall, Jackson kept Loullier in jail and banished Judge Hall from the city. The following day, after confirmation of the peace treaty arrived, Jackson revoked martial law and released Loullier.[131] Following restoration of civil law, Judge Hall return to New Orleans and ordered General Jackson to appear in court to show

---

[125] *See* Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821* 310 (1977); *see also* Jonathan Lurie, *Andrew Jackson, Martial Law, Civilian Control of the Military, and American Politics: An Intriguing Amalgam,"* 126 MIL L. REV. 133 (1989).

[126] Remini, *supra* note 125, at 310.

[127] *Id.* at 310.

[128] *Id.*

[129] *Id.*

[130] *Id.* at 312.

[131] *Id.*

why he should not be held in contempt of court for refusing to obey the court's writ of *habeas corpus* and for imprisoning the judge. Over his protestations, the Judge held Jackson in contempt, and fined him a thousand dollars.[132]

Notwithstanding his earlier experience, in 1818 during the Seminole War, General Jackson again turned to military courts-martial to prosecute two British subjects for assisting the Creek Indians in waging war against the United States.[133] Alexander Arbuthnot was charged with spying and inciting and aiding the Creek Indians, while Robert Ambrister was charged only with aiding and abetting the Creeks in their war against the United States.[134] While Arbuthnot was found not guilty of spying, the "special" court-martial found both Arbuthnot and Ambrister guilty of several charges of assisting the Indians.[135] The courts-martial originally sentenced both men to death, but ultimately reconsidered Ambrister's punishment and sentenced him to fifty lashes and one year confinement. General Jackson ignored the court's revised decision and executed both men.[136] General Jackson's courts-martial and execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister provoked great criticism,[137 and] resulted in condemnation by the House Committee on Military Affairs, which stated that the courts-

---

[132] *Id.*

[133] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 832.

[134] *See* Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 9.

[135] *Id.*

[136] Indeed Winthrop argued that Jackson's action of overriding the sentence was "wholly arbitrary and illegal [and] for such an order and its execution a military commander would now be indictable for murder." WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 464.

[137] *Id.*

martial had "no cognizance or jurisdiction over the offenses charged."[138] Similarly, a Senate Committee established to investigate the conduct of the Seminole War concluded that Jackson's actions were an "unnecessary act of severity on the part of the commanding general, and a departure from . . . the dictates of sound policy."[139] While the House ultimately passed a resolution supporting the trial and execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister, the Senate never took action on the committee report or the legality of General Jackson's actions.[140]

Despite General Jackson's isolated use of military tribunals in the early nineteenth century, it was not until America's occupation of Mexico in 1847 that U.S. forces used military tribunals on a widespread basis to try both people and offenses not specified by the Articles of War.[141] As a result, "it is generally agreed that the real origin of the military commission dates from the Mexican War of 1846-1848."[142] During the United States occupation of Mexico, both U.S. Soldiers and Mexican citizens committed many common-law crimes.[143] However, General Scott understood that the Articles of War did not provide military commanders with the authority to punish Soldiers for crimes against civilians. Nor

[138] Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 10.

[139] *Id.* at 11.

[140] *Id.*

[141] *See* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 832 ("It was not till 1847, upon the occupation by our forces of the territory of Mexico in the war with that nation, that the military commission was, as such, initiated.").

[142] Glazier, *supra* note 11, at 2027.

[143] Scott knew from the study of Napoleon's men and military history that lawlessness of soldiers would incite guerilla uprisings. As such, he wanted to impose martial law to protect Mexican property rights and prevent guerilla war. *See* TIMOTHY D. JOHNSON, WINFIELD SCOTT, THE QUEST FOR MILITARY GLORY 166-68 (1998).

did the Articles of War extend military jurisdiction over Mexican citizens under occupation.[144] General Scott argued that military commanders lacked authority to impose "legal punishment for any of those offences, for by the strange omission of Congress, American troops take with them beyond the limits of their own country, no law but the Constitution of the United States, and the rules and articles of war."[145] He argued that the Constitution and Articles of War "do not provide any court for the trial and punishment of murder, rape, theft, [etc,] . . . no matter by whom, or on whom committed."[146] Understandably, General Scott did not want to use local Mexican courts to prosecute U.S. Soldiers charged with crimes against Mexican citizens. Nor did he trust Mexican courts to prosecute Mexican citizens accused of crimes against U.S. forces. General Scott therefore asked Congress to pass legislation amending the Articles of War to cover these crimes.[147] But once the Secretary of War informed General Scott that Congress would not expand the Articles of War, Scott took matters into his own hands and published an order invoking martial law and establishing military commissions "until Congress could be stimulated to legislate on the subject."[148] After issuing this "addition to the written military code prescribed by Congress in the rules and articles of war," Scott proceeded to prosecute both

[144] 2 MEMOIRS OF LIEUT. GENERAL SCOTT 392 (1864).

[145] SCOTT, *supra* note 144, at 392.

[146] *Id.* at 393.

[147] *Id.* at 392. Actually, General Scott did not approach Congress directly but used his chain of command by drafting an order to establish military commissions and presenting the order to the Secretary of War and the Attorney General. The Secretary of War forwarded this request to Congress recommending they pass legislation authorizing military commissions. Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 12.

[148] SCOTT, *supra* note 144, at 393.

Mexicans citizens and U.S. Soldiers by military commissions for common law crimes.[149] In addition to convening courts-martial and military commissions, General Scott appointed a third military tribunal called a "Council of War" in order to prosecute violations of the law of war.[150] This War Council heard cases alleging violations of the law of war against both Mexicans and U.S. civilians.[151]

2. Supreme Court Review of Military Tribunals 1775-1861

Although military commanders like Generals Jackson and Scott occasionally used military tribunals, these tribunals were not authorized by Congress and were never reviewed by the Supreme Court. It is therefore difficult to determine the precedential value of these military commissions. While General Jackson's use was heavily criticized,[152] General Scott's was more widely accepted and, while acknowledging congressional authority to legislate, many commentators favorable viewed their use as an interim common-law measure

[149] JOHNSON, *supra* note 143, at 165.

[150] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 832.

[151] Glazier, *supra* note 11, at 2033. Commander Glazier argues that Councils of War were "short-lived experiments that should have no precedential value." He bases this assertion in part on the fact "council of war" courts were combined with military occupation "military commission" courts during the Civil War. *Id.* However, others scholars, like Lieutenant Colonel Bickers, argue that General Scott used the term "council of war" to highlight the jurisdictional distinction between the two courts. A distinction, Bickers argues, that remains important to analyzing the current military commissions being used in the Global War on Terrorism. *See* Bickers, *supra* note 31, at 909-12.

[152] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 464 (noting the negative reaction to Jackson's action and the debate it fostered in Congress for years to come). Professor Lurie noted that in the case of Jackson, "it is not clear what was settled [because] the real issue—was Jackson justified in detaining Judge Hall and disobeying the writ—was never resolved. . . . Whether or not a definitive answer could have served as a guide for future decisions can never be known. The actual record shows pragmatic rather than doctrinal responses that on the whole are not encouraging." Lurie, *Andrew Jackson, supra* note 125, at 144. *But see* WILLIAM E. BIRKHIMER, MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND MARTIAL LAW 354 (1904) (supporting the inherent authority of Jackson and other military commanders to take whatever action they deemed appropriate).

in the absence of specific legislation.[153] Prior to the Civil War, Supreme Court review of military tribunals was limited to collateral review of military courts-martial. In *Wise v. Withers*[154]—the first case to reach the Supreme Court on collateral attack—the plaintiff sued to recover a fine he had been charged at court-martial for refusing to report for military duty.[155] Plaintiff claimed that because he was a justice of the peace and a congressional statute exempted 'officers of the United States' from military service, he could not be ordered to military duty.[156] When the plaintiff failed to appear for duty, a court-martial imposed a fine in his absence and sent an officer to his house to take property to pay the debt.[157] The plaintiff's suit was for trespass against the officer. The Supreme Court agreed with the plaintiff's position, holding, that because he was statutorily exempt from military duty, the court-martial "clearly lacked its jurisdiction."[158] The Court relied on the fact that Congress had specifically excluded federal officers from military service as a justification for limiting the court-martial jurisdiction.

Twenty-one years later, in *Martin v. Mott*,[159] the Supreme Court again took up the issue of military jurisdiction. Like the *Wise* case, *Martin* involved a suit to recover property

---

[153] *See, e.g.*, STEPHEN V. BENET, A TREATISE ON MILITARY LAW AND THE PRACTICE OF COURTS-MARTIAL 15 (2d ed. 1862) (supporting the use of military commissions to try "offenses not punishable by courts-martial" or within the "jurisdiction of any existing civil courts."); BIRKHIMER, *supra* note 152, at 354.

[154] 7 U.S. (3 Cranch.) 331 (1806).

[155] *Id.*

[156] *Id*. at 335-36.

[157] *Id* at 331-32.

[158] *Id.* at 337.

[159] Martin v. Mott, 25 U.S. (12 Wheat.) 19 (1827).

that was taken as a fine at court-martial when the accused failed to appear for military duty during the War of 1812.[160] The plaintiff alleged many different jurisdictional errors, including that because he refused to enter military service, he was not "employed in the service of the United States" as required under the Articles of War and therefore must be tried by civil court instead of by court-martial.[161] Writing for the Court, Justice Story held that even though the plaintiff was "not employed in military service of the United States" under Congress' Act of 1795, and thus not subject to *all* of the Articles of War, because he was ordered to military duty he was still subject to court-martial.[162] Ironically, the Court held that someone *ordered* to military service might in fact be entitled to less procedural protections at courts-martial then someone who was actually *employed* in military service of the United States.[163] In *Martin*, the Court bypassed the remaining procedural problems with the court-martial, and held that once jurisdiction of the court-martial is determined, the court-martial judgment is conclusive.[164]

---

[160] *Id.* at 33-34.

[161] *Id.* at 34.

[162] *Id.* Justice Story relied on Houston v. Moore, (5 Wheat) 1, 29 (1820). *Houston* held that a militia man refusing the call to active service could be tried in either a state or federal court-martial. This was based on Congressional Act of April 18, 1814, which authorized a court-martial for "the trial of militia, drafted, detached and called forth for the service of the United States . . . shall be conducted in the manner prescribed by the rules and articles of war." *Id.* at 14. Because that case involved a state court-martial, the judge's pronouncement about the authority of federal courts-martial was merely dicta. It was not until *Martin* that the Court actually held that federal courts-martial over inductees were constitutional.

[163] *Martin*, 25 U.S. at 35.

[164] *Id.* at 38.

In 1857, the Supreme Court decided *Dynes v. Hoover*,[165] the seminal case concerning military jurisdiction. The plaintiff, Dynes, was a sailor who brought a damages action for false imprisonment against the United States after he was convicted for attempted desertion and sentenced to hard labor without pay.[166] Dynes argued that while he was charged with the offense of desertion at court-martial, he was found guilty only of *attempted* desertion, which was not listed as an offense under the Articles for Government of the Navy.[167] As such, the court-martial "had no jurisdiction or authority" to convict him of an offense not listed by congressional statute and not charged at his court-martial.[168] The Court reiterated that if a court-martial acted without jurisdiction over an offense, the court-martial becomes a trespasser, but it refused to hold so in this case. Even though Congress did not specifically define the offense of attempted desertion, because Congress provided in the Navy Rules for the punishment of "unnamed offenses" which were "in accordance with the laws and nations of the sea," this language provided the court-martial with jurisdiction over Dynes' offense.[169] In addition to looking to congressional statutes to determine the jurisdiction of courts-martial, the Court went on to declare the limits of civil review over military tribunals. The Court held:

[165] Dynes v. Hoover 64 U.S. (20 How.) 65 (1858).

[166] *Id*. at 77.

[167] Act of 23, April, 1800, 2 Stat 45 (1800). These rules were the Navy's equivalent of the Articles of War until the two were merged in 1950 under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. *See* Part 4.C1, *infra.*

[168] *Dynes*, 64 U.S. at 80.

[169] *Id.* at 82.

> With the sentences of courts-martial which have been convened regularly and have proceeded legally, and by which punishments are directed, not forbidden by law, or which are according to the laws and customs of the sea, civil courts have nothing to do, not are they in any way alterable by them. If it were otherwise, the civil courts would virtually administer the rules and articles of war, irrespective of those to whom that duty and obligation has been confided by the laws of the United States from whose decisions no appeal or jurisdiction of any kind has been given to the civil magistrates or the civil courts.[170]

Following the War with Mexico, the Supreme Court decided two other cases that dealt more broadly with military jurisdiction, though not with the specific jurisdiction of military courts. In *Fleming v. Page*,[171] the plaintiffs argued that during America's occupation of Mexico, under international law, Mexico was part of the sovereign territory of the United States. Because Mexico was not an independent sovereign, the plaintiffs alleged that the import tariff they were required to pay while bringing goods over the border was illegal.[172] The Court agreed that under international law then in existence, Mexico should be considered part of the United States.[173] Nevertheless, the Court stated that the peaceful nature of our Constitution mandates that a congressional declaration of war "can never be presumed for the purpose of conquest."[174] Rather, the President can expand the land of the United States only by specific congressional legislation giving the President treaty-making authority.[175]

---

[170] *Id.*

[171] 50 U.S. (9 How.) 603 (1850).

[172] *Id.* at 614.

[173] *Id*. at 615.

[174] *Id.*

[175] *Id.*

Similarly, in *Jecker v. Montgomery*,[176] the Navy identified a U.S. trade ship, *The Admittance*, that was illegally trading with Mexico and captured it as a prize of war.[177] Because military exigencies prevented the naval commander from sending *The Admittance* to a United States port, he left it in Mexico, where a presidential proclamation had created civil courts to adjudicate claims of captured property.[178] The Supreme Court held that "under the Constitution of the Untied States . . . neither the President nor any military officer can establish a court in a conquered country, and authorize it to decide upon the rights of the United States or of individuals in prize cases."[179]

In sum, prior to the Civil War, although the Supreme Court occasionally limited military authority, it never invoked the Constitution to limit the specific jurisdiction of military courts. Instead, it deferred broadly to congressional action in determining the authority of military tribunals. If Congress spoke clearly on the matter and exempted someone by statute—as in *Wise*—the Court determined that the court-martial exceeded its statutorily-created personal jurisdiction. In general, the Court took a very expansive interpretation of Congress' grant of jurisdiction to military courts: Thus, the military could court-martial draftees even though they were "not employed in the service of the United

[176] Jecker v. Montgomery, 54 U.S. (13 How.) 498 (1852).

[177] *Id.* at 513.

[178] *Id.* at 513-14.

[179] *Id* at 515. While the Court invalidated the use of Courts to determine prize cases and to decide upon rights of United States citizens, the Court did legitimize the establishment of military government in Mexico. *See* Leitensdorfer v. Webb, 61 U.S. (20 How.) 176, 178 ("[A]s occupying conqueror . . . these ordinances must have displaced and superseded every previous institution of the vanquished or deposed political power incompatible with them."); *accord* Cross v. Harrison, 57 U.S.(16 How.) 164, 189-90 (1853).

States."[180] In addition, the Court broadly construed Congress' statutory grant of subject matter jurisdiction to allow for the conviction of charges that were not specifically enumerated in the Articles of War (or even charged at trial), as long as they were "in accordance with the laws and nations of the sea."[181] During this era, the Court did not use the Constitution to limit the jurisdiction of military courts.

One reason for the Court's general acquiescence to military courts in this era may have been that the military attempted to exercise jurisdiction only over a limited class of people and limited number of offenses.[182] For example, throughout the nineteenth century, the Army narrowly interpreted the Articles of War provision extending jurisdiction to "all persons serving with the armed forces" as strictly a wartime measure.[183] Because military courts were used infrequently, the Court played a minor role in reviewing their decisions. Of course, the Court did recognize that the Constitution places some limits on the ability of the President and his military commanders to take unlimited action during war.[184] The Court eventually invoked this notion—that the constitution places some restraint on military power, even in war—in limiting the jurisdiction of military tribunals.

---

[180] Martin v. Mott, 25 U.S. (12 Wheat.) 19, 34 (1827).

[181] Dynes v. Hoover, 64 U.S. (20 How.) 65, 80 (1858).

[182] *See* Wiener, *supra* note 25, at 8 ("military law . . . applied to a mere handful of individuals, all of whom were soldiers by choice, and for the most part it denounced only offenses that were not punishable in courts of common law"). For an example of the actual laws in effect for the Army and Navy during this era, see Articles of War of 1806, ch. 20, 2 Stat. 359 (1800); Articles for the Government of the Navy, ch. 33, 2 Stat. 45 (1800).

[183] *See* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 131-32.

[184] *See supra* notes 171-179 and accompanying text.

B. Military Tribunals from the Civil War to World War I

1. Authority and Use of Military Tribunals 1861-1914

The Civil War brought about a massive expansion of the use of military tribunals,[185] but little statutory change to the Articles of War authorized this expansion of military jurisdiction.[186] Prior to 1862, Congress had not recognized any military court other than a court-martial,[187] but that year Congress passed the first of several laws that statutorily recognized the existence of military commissions.[188] However, this congressional act gave no specific guidance on the validity or proper use of such military commission. Rather, this early statute merely endorsed the use of military commissions against people who were already subject to the Articles of War.[189] The first significant change to the Articles of War

[185] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 834 (noting that during the Civil War and Reconstruction period military commissions "must have tried and given judgment in upwards of two thousand cases.").

[186] In fact, between 1806 and 1862 there were only 12 amendments to the Articles of War. *See* Carol Chomsky, *The United States-Dakota War Trials: A Study in Military Injustice,* 43 STAN. L. REV. 13, n.305 (1990) *citing* FREDERICK C. BRIGHTLY, ANALYTICAL DIGEST OF THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1789-1757, at 83 (1858) and FREDERICK C. BRIGHTLY, ANALYTICAL DIGEST OF THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1757-1763, at 1101-03 (1863).

[187] Congressional Acts also recognized military courts of inquiry and boards of general officers. *See, e.g.*, 2 Stat. 359, 370 (1862). While these were information-gathering bodies and not criminal courts, at times commanders used them in determining whether to punish enemy spies. *See supra* note 47.

[188] *See* 12 Stat. 598, sec. 5 (1862) (requiring the judge advocate general to keep records "of all courts-martial and military commissions.").

[189] *See, e.g.*, Glazier, *supra* note 11, at n.154 (stating "legislation enacted during the Civil War . . . only authorized [military commissions] to try persons already subject to court-martial jurisdiction."). While accurate for this first statute, this point seems incorrect for the Civil War in its entirety. *See, e.g.*, Act of July 2, 1864, ch. 215 § 6, 13 Stat. 394, 397 (1864) (authorizing trial by military commission of guerillas for war crimes not provided in the Articles of War). *See* discussion *infra* note 201 and accompanying text. Moreover, the mere fact that Congress referenced military commissions could be seen as implicit authorization for their continued use during the Civil War to prosecute civilians.

took place in1863,[190] when Congress modified the Articles to extend the jurisdiction of both courts-martial and military commissions over several common-law crimes that took place "in times of war or rebellion."[191] These crimes were neither purely military in nature nor directly related to the good order and discipline of the armed forces, as had been previously required by the Articles of War.[192] They covered common-law crimes like murder, rape, and arson,[193] committed by members of the armed forces who were already subject to the Articles of War.[194] Congress "did not give [military] tribunals jurisdiction over citizens who were not in the military,"[195] but by subjecting Soldiers to military tribunals for common-law crimes, Congress gave military commanders the means to discipline Soldiers that General Scott sought during the Mexican War. As noted, this extension of military jurisdiction over Soldiers' common-law crimes was authorized only "in times of war or rebellion."[196] The Act of 1863 made several additional modifications to the Articles of War, such as subjecting spies to courts-martial or military commission,[197] and criminalizing resisting the draft.[198] Congress rejected President Lincoln's previous proclamation that citizens resisting the draft

[190] *See* Act of Mar. 3, 1863, ch. 75, § 30, 12 Stat. 736 (1863) (codified at 18 Rev. Stat. 1342, art. 58 (1875)).

[191] *Id.* The Act held that "murder, manslaughter, robbery, larceny, and certain other specified crimes, when committed by military persons in time of war or rebellion, should be punishable by sentence of court-martial or *military commission*." *See also* WINTHROP *supra* note 1, at 833 (detailing several statutes passed in 1863 and 1864 that recognized the propriety of using military commissions or courts-martial).

[192] *See* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 667.

[193] *See id.* at 689.

[194] 12 Stat. 736, sec. 30 (1863).

[195] Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 20.

[196] 12 Stat. 736, sec. 30 (1863).

[197] *Id.* at 737, sec. 38.

[198] *Id.* at 735, sec. 25.

would be tried by military tribunal,[199] and instead required that individuals charged with resisting the draft would be tried in civilian court.[200] The next year, in 1864, Congress enacted the first statute that authorized a trial by military commission for offenses that were not triable by court martial. Specifically, it allowed commanders to "execute sentences imposed by military commissions upon guerrillas for violation of the laws and customs of war."[201]

Following the end of the Civil War, the next significant congressional modification of military jurisdiction was Congress' passage of the 1867 Reconstruction Acts.[202] This legislation gave military commanders the authority to try criminal offenders by military commission instead of in civil court, if the commander deemed it appropriate.[203] The Reconstruction Acts explicitly authorized military commanders to try civilians for common-law crimes despite the fact that the civilians were not otherwise subject to the Articles of War.[204] Following Reconstruction, Congress took very little action with respect to military tribunals for almost 40 years. It would take the turn of the century and World War I before any other significant revision of the Articles of War.

---

[199] *See* Lincoln's Order, *infra* note 205.

[200] 12 Stat. 735, sec. 25 (1863).

[201] Act of July 2, 1864, ch. 215 § 6, 13 Stat. 394, 397 (1864). During the Mexican War General Scott used "military commissions" to punish common law crimes and "councils of war" to prosecute law of war violations. During the Civil War the two courts merged and the term military commission was retained to cover both types of courts. *See* WINTHROP *supra* note 1, at 833.

[202] An Act to provide for the more efficient Government of the Rebel States, ch. 153, § 3-4, 14 Stat. 428 (1867). This Act was passed over President Johnson's veto on March 2, 1867.

[203] *See id.*; *see also* WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 853.

[204] Other than the statute of 1864 authorizing commanders to execute military commission sentences for law of war violations, the Reconstruction Acts were the first and only congressional acts to explicitly authorize the use of military commissions.

While Congress did very little to expand military jurisdiction during the Civil War, the President was not so constrained. Congress was in recess in April of 1861 when President Lincoln declared martial law and suspended the writ of *habeas corpus* between Washington and Philadelphia.[205] This action allowed military commanders to arrest anyone they deemed dangerous.[206] Lincoln defended the constitutionality of his actions and sought Congress' ratification of his decisions when Congress convened in an emergency session in July of 1861.[207] Congress ultimately authorized the President to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus* in 1863,[208] but did not explicitly authorize the use of military tribunals. Instead, Congress required that the President inform the federal courts of everyone held as military prisoners, and allowed the federal courts to release the prisoners if they were not properly indicted following their arrests.[209]

Following the examples of previous American generals like Jackson and Scott, field commanders initially convened military commissions in areas where they had declared martial law.[210] For example, in Missouri in August 1861, Major General Fremont published

---

[205] Letter from President Abraham Lincoln, to General Winfield Scott, *in* WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST, ALL THE LAWS BUT ONE 25 (1998) [hereinafter Lincoln's Order].

[206] *Id.* at 25.

[207] 6 LIFE AND WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN 3, 14 (Marion Mills Miller ed., 1907).

[208] Act of Mar. 3, 1863, ch. 81, § 1, 12 Stat. 755 (1863). On August 6, 1861, Congress passed legislation approving President Lincoln's acts, proclamations, and orders respecting the Army and Navy "as if they had been issued and done under the previous express authority and direction of the Congress of the United States." Act of Aug. 6, 1861, ch 63, §3, 12 Stat. 326. However, this Act did not address or support the President's suspension of *habeas corpus*.

[209] 12 Stat. 755, sec. 2 (1863).

[210] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 830 (noting that martial law gives military tribunals jurisdiction over both law of war offenses and civil offenses that the commander feels are in the public interest).

an order proclaiming that anyone found with a weapon would be court-martialed, and, if found guilty, shot.[211] Lincoln rebuked General Fremont's unnecessarily harsh and broad order,[212] but military commanders continued to use military commissions in occupied territory and places under martial law.[213] In January 1862, Major General Haddock sought and received permission from Washington to impose martial law and convene military commissions by arguing that the civilian courts were unable to maintain law and order.[214] In September 24, 1862, President Lincoln himself directly sanctioned the use of military commissions when he issued the following proclamation:

> During the existing insurrection, and as a necessary measure for suppressing the same, all rebels and insurgents, their aiders and abettors within the United States, and all person discouraging volunteer enlistments, resisting militia drafts, or guilty of any disloyal practice affording aid and comfort to rebels against the authority of the United States, shall be subject to martial law, and liable to trial and punishment by courts martial or military commissions.[215]

---

[211] MARK E. NEELY JR., THE FATE OF LIBERTY: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND CIVIL LIBERTIES 34-35 (1991).

[212] Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 18 (noting that Lincoln feared that shooting Confederate soldiers would lead to the shooting of Union Soldiers, among other concerns Lincoln had with Fremont's order).

[213] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 823-30

[214] *See* NEELY, *supra* note 211, at 34; *see also* Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 18, *quoting* General Halleck as saying "civil courts can give us no assistance as they are very generally unreliable." in THE WAR OF THE REBELLION: A COMPILATION OF THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE UNION AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES, SERIES II 247 (1894) [hereinafter WAR OF THE REBELLION].

[215] Proclamation Suspending the Writ of Habeas Corpus Because of Resistance to Draft (Sept. 24, 1862) *in* 6 LIFE AND WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, *supra* note 207, at 203. It is worth noting that Congress subsequently criminalized resisting the draft but stated that accused must be tried in civil court, not by a military tribunal. *See supra* note 200 and accompanying text.

Throughout the Civil War, commanders repeatedly used military tribunals to try civilians in areas under martial law or under military occupation.[216] They were also used to prosecute Confederate soldiers accused of violating the laws of war,[217] and to try people accused of disloyal practices and fighting as guerrillas.[218]

In addition to their use during the Civil War, military tribunals were also used during this era to deal with other serious conflicts short of war. When fighting broke out between the Dakota (Sioux) Indians and American settlers in Minnesota, a military commission prosecuted nearly 400 Dakotas of murder, rape and robbery.[219] The military originally convicted three hundred three Dakotas and sentenced them to death, but executed only 38 because President Lincoln commuted or pardoned the remaining sentences.[220] A military commission was also used in 1873 to prosecute Indians for killing an army general during a truce in the Moduc War.[221]

In May of 1865, President Andrew Johnson convened perhaps the most controversial military tribunal in American history: a military commission prosecuting the eight people accused of participating in the assassination of President Lincoln.[222] Four of the conspirators

---

[216] *See* NEELY, *supra* note 211, at 34.

[217] Examples of law of war violations prosecuted by military commission include robbing civilians and passing Union lines in civilian dress. WAR OF THE REBELLION, *supra* note 214, at 674-81 (1894). While the Union never recognized the Confederacy as an independent sovereign, Confederate soldiers were treated as legitimate belligerents and not tried for treason. *See* Chomsky, *supra* note 186, at n.328.

[218] *See* J.G. RANDALL, CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS UNDER LINCOLN 175-76 (1951).

[219] *See* Chomsky, *supra* note 186 (providing a comprehensive and authoritative account on the Dakota Trials).

[220] Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 21.

[221] *See* KEITH A. MURRAY, THE MODUCS AND THEIR WAR 293-97 (1959).

[222] ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 110 (calling the trial of Lincoln's assassins "easily the most spectacular of all military commissions."). Dr. Samuel Mudd, one of the convicted but not sentenced to death,

were sentenced to death and ordered to hang, while the other four were sentenced to life in prison.[223] On July 7, 1865, Mary Surratt, the lone woman sentenced to death, convinced a federal judge to grant her petition for *habeas corpus*.[224] However, the judge relented upon receiving a written letter from President Johnson proclaiming the continued suspension of *habeas corpus* in this particular case, and the military executed Mary Surratt the next day.[225] The very next month, another military commission prosecuted and convicted Henry Wirz of abusing Union Soldiers in Andersonville, a prisoner of war camp in Georgia.[226] Notwithstanding evidence that indicated Wirz made several efforts to improve conditions at

---

challenged his conviction via *habeas corpus*. The district court rejected his claim and held that President Lincoln's murder was triable by military tribunal. *See* 17 F. Cas. 954 (S.D. Fla 1868). In 1950, Clinton Rossiter wrote "the pardoning of the three surviving accomplices in 1869, put an end to any possibility that the legality of the military commission would ever be tested in the courts." *Id.* at 112. While that statement seemed obvious at the time, amazingly, the battle over the validity of this military commission remains alive today. In 1992, Dr. Mudd's grandson got the Army Board for the Correction of Military Records to agree that the military commission lacked jurisdiction over the original case. The Secretary of the Army rejected the Army Board's recommendation that that Dr. Mudd's Conviction be set aside and the case was heard in federal court in 1998. That court ruled that the Secretary of the Army's rejection of the Army Board's recommendation was not supported by substantial evidence in the record and remanded the case back for further hearings. Caldera, 26 F. Supp. 2d 113 (D.D.C. 1998). In 2001 the court held that the military tribunal did have jurisdiction to try Dr. Mudd for violations of the law of war. *See* Mudd v. Army, 134 F. Supp. 2d 138 (D.D.C. 2001). After Dr. Mudd's grandson (who was over 100 years old) died in 2002, the Court of Appeals ruled that the remaining family lacked standing to continue the challenge. Mudd v. White, 309 F.3d 819, 822 (D.C. Cir. 2002). As such, the controversy lives on.

[223] WILLIAM HANCHETT, THE LINCOLN MURDER CONSPIRACIES 65-70 (1986).

[224] ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 111.

[225] *Id.* at 111. Mary Surratt's execution ended up being a major source of embarrassment for President Johnson when the Army Judge Advocate General later stated that he had presented President Johnson with a petition signed by five members of the military tribunal recommending clemency for Ms. Suratt. Johnson denied he had ever seen the petition until several days after Surratt was hanged. *See* HANCHETT, *supra* note 223 at 87.

[226] Trial of Henry Wirz, *reprinted in* H.R. EXEC. DOC. NO. NO 23, 40th Cong., 2d Sess. 1 (1868).

Andersonville,[227] he was found guilty of most of the charges and sentenced to death by hanging.[228]

Military commissions were also used in the South between 1867 and 1870 during the period of Reconstruction. In accordance with congressional statutes, military commissions were used whenever a commander believed a "resort to military jurisdiction was essential to the due administration of justice."[229] In addition, military tribunals were used in the Philippines and Puerto Rico following the Spanish-American War.[230]

2. Supreme Court Review of Military Tribunals 1861-1914

Military tribunals' extensive use during the Civil War era resulted in a sharp increase in the number of cases filed in federal court challenging the validity of these military proceedings.[231] But, civilian court review remained extremely limited, in part because of the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*.[232] While several lower courts continued to issue writs of *habeas corpus*, the military was under orders to disobey these writs, and the courts

[227] *Id.* at 226, 240.

[228] *Id.* at 815.

[229] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 853. Winthrop notes that during this time period military commissions were not used all that frequently. He stated that military commissions of this era did not try any law of war violations. Moreover, because commanders generally let the state courts handle regular "crimes and disorders" there were only around two hundred military commissions convened throughout Reconstruction. *Id.*

[230] *See* BRIAN MCALLISTER LINN, THE U.S. ARMY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THE PHILIPPINE WAR, 1899-1902, at 55-56 (1989); CHARLES MAGOON, REPORTS ON THE LAW OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN TERRITORY SUBJECT TO MILITARY OCCUPATION BY THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES 19-34 (1902).

[231] *See* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 28.

[232] *See supra* notes 205-208 and accompanying text.

were powerless to enforce their judgments.[233] The most famous of these cases occurred in May 1861, when John Merryman was arrested as a suspected leader of a secessionist group intent on blowing up railroads and bridges in the Maryland area.[234] After his arrest, Mr. Merryman's attorney sought a writ of *habeas corpus* from Justice Taney, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who was sitting in his capacity as a circuit judge. When the Chief Justice issued the writ directing the military to produce Mr. Merryman, the military commander refused, citing President Lincoln's suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*.[235] Justice Taney issued a citation to hold the commander in contempt; however, the clerk of the court was unable to enter the military compound to serve the writ.[236] Thereafter, Justice Taney issued his opinion that the military lacked the authority to arrest anyone who "was not subject to the Articles of War, for an offense against the laws of the United States, except in the aid of the judicial authority, and subject to its control."[237] Judge Taney recognized the court's inability to implement this order, so he directed his clerk to transmit a copy to the President of the United States to assist Lincoln "in fulfillment of his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed."[238] President Lincoln did not respond to Justice Taney's rebuke and continued to confine Merryman, eventually indicting him for treason. However,

[233] RANDALL, *supra* note 218, at 157-63.

[234] *Ex parte* Merryman, 17 Fed. Cas. 144 (D.C. Md. 1861).

[235] REHNQUIST, *supra* note 205, at 32-33.

[236] *Merryman*, 17 Fed. Cas. at 147.

[237] *Id*. at 153.

[238] *Id.*

Merryman was never brought to trial either by military commission or before a civilian court.[239]

Following Chief Justice Taney's conflict with President Lincoln, the Supreme Court took a very deferential approach to the President's authority to detain people and to use military tribunals. In *Ex parte Vallandigham*,[240]—the lone case concerning military trials to reach the Supreme Court during the war—the Court sidestepped the issue of the military court's jurisdiction by holding that the Court lacked direct appellate authority over military tribunals.[241] Thereafter, the Supreme Court did not hear another case involving the authority of military tribunals until 1866, well after the war was over, and a year after President Lincoln had been assassinated.[242] The Court's decision that year, however, is among the most significant holdings the Supreme Court has ever made in defining the jurisdiction of military tribunals.

---

[239] REHNQUIST, *supra* note 205, at 38-39.

[240] 68 U.S. 243, 1 Wall. 243 (1864)

[241] *Id.* at 251. The Court was able to evade this issue because Vallandigham's request to the Supreme Court came as a writ of *certiorari* instead of a writ of *habeas corpus*. The Court held that it lacked direct appellate review to entertain the *certiorari* writ, and as the Supreme Court, it lacked original jurisdiction to issue a *habeas corpus* order. *Id*. at 253-54. Some scholars argue that this decision was a case of the Court trying to avoid the issue during time of war because if the Court wanted to decide Vallandigham's case it could have converted the petition for *certiorari* to one for a writ of *habeas corpus*. *See* ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 37.

[242] *See* ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 30 ("nothing more concerning the legality of military commissions was heard in the courts of the United States until the end of the war."); *see also* Rosen, *supra* note 70, at 29 (noting that the first court-martial to reach the Supreme Court on *habeas corpus* did not occur until 1879).

Lambdin Milligan was an Indiana attorney who was active in Democratic politics.[243] He was arrested in the summer of 1864, charged with conspiring against the Union, and tried by military commission.[244] On October 21, 1864, the military commission found Milligan guilty and sentenced him to hang.[245] Milligan petitioned for *habeas corpus* arguing that the military tribunal lacked jurisdiction over him and that he was entitled to a trial by jury in civilian court. The Supreme Court held that that the military commission lacked jurisdiction over Milligan because the law of war "can never be applied to citizens in states . . . where the courts are open and their process unobstructed."[246] A military commission lacked the jurisdiction to try Milligan, or any civilian citizen, for "any offense whatever" if the civil courts where open.

The Court reached its decision by resorting to the literal language of the Constitution and the historical importance the founding fathers placed on the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments of the Bill of Rights. The Court stated that the answer to whether a military court has jurisdiction is not found in previous court decisions or in the laws of war. Rather, it is "found in that clause of the original Constitution which says 'That the trial of all crimes, except in case of impeachment, shall be by jury;' and in the fourth, fifth, and sixth articles of

[243] REHNQUIST, *supra* note 205, at 89.

[244] *Id.* at 83.

[245] *Ex parte* Milligan, 71 U.S. 2, 107 (1886).

[246] *Id.* at 121. While the Court was unanimous that the military commission that tried Milligan was unconstitutional, four justices disagreed with the majority that both Congress and the President lacked the authority to convene a military tribunal. *Id.* at 137. *See infra* note 253 and accompanying text.

the amendments."[247] The Court noted that the President alone convened Milligan's military commission and the military court was clearly not an Article III court established by Congress. Moreover, the Court held that every citizen is guaranteed the right to a grand jury indictment, a trial by jury, and the other guaranteed protections of the Fourth, Fifth, and Six Amendments.[248] The only exception provided in the Constitution was the Fifth Amendment's express exception for the military, in cases "arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger."[249] The Court held that even during times of war, not even "the President, or Congress or the Judiciary [can] disturb" these essential safeguards.[250] The Court rejected the claim that during times of martial law the President and his military commanders alone had the authority to decide whether to use military commissions instead of constitutional courts. The Court stated that such a result: "would destroy[] every guarantee of the Constitution, and effectually render[] the 'military independent of and superior to the civil power.'—the attempt to do which by the King of Great Britain was deemed by our fathers such an offense, that they assigned it to the world as one of the causes which impelled them to declare their independence."[251] While holding that military commissions lacked jurisdiction over civilians for "any offense whatsoever" when the courts were open, the Court also acknowledged that there were times when martial law is necessary, and the use of military courts may be appropriate:

---

[247] *Id.* at 119.

[248] *Id.* at 119-20, 123.

[249] *Id.* at 119-20 (*citing* U.S. CONST. Amend. V.).

[250] *Milligan*, 71 U.S. at 125.

[251] *Id*. at 124.

> If, in foreign invasion or civil war, the courts are actually closed, and it is impossible to administer criminal justice according to law, *then* , on the theatre of active military operations, where war really prevails, there is a necessity to furnish a substitute for the civil authority, thus overthrown, to preserve the safety of the army and society; and as no power is left but the military, it is allowed to govern by martial rule until the laws can have their free course. As necessity creates the rule, so it limits its duration; for, if this government is continued *after* the courts are reinstated, it is a gross usurpation of power. Martial rule can never exist where the courts are open, and in the proper and unobstructed exercise of their jurisdiction.[252]

So, while the Constitution might allow for the use of military courts under a true necessity, generally speaking, the Constitution prohibited the use of military courts against civilians, regardless of the nature of the offense. The Court was unanimous in its opinion that Milligan's trial by military commission was unconstitutional, but four justices argued that Congress, not the President, could have authorized his trial by military commission. Relying on Congress' power under Article I of the Constitution to declare war and to govern the land and naval Forces, these justices held that "Congress, had power, though not exercised, to authorize the military commission which was held in Indiana."[253]

The decision of the majority in *Milligan*—holding that neither the President nor Congress could authorize a military tribunal—provoked enormous public controversy.[254] Many viewed it as a direct assault upon the plans of radical republicans beginning

[252] *Id*. at 127.

[253] *Id.* at 137, 139-42 (Chase, Wayne, Swayne, and Miller. JJ., concurring).

[254] ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 31 (stating that the Milligan decision resulted in "the most violent and partisan agitation over a Supreme Court decision since the days of Dred Scott.").

Reconstruction.[255] In apparent disregard of *Milligan's* majority holding, Congress authorized the use of military commissions during Reconstruction and commanders continued to employ them throughout the South.[256] A number of challenges to these military commissions reached the Supreme Court, but the defendants were released before the Court ever issued a ruling as to their constitutionality.[257]

It was not until 1879 that the first court-martial, *ex parte Reed*,[258] reached the Supreme Court by a petition for *habeas corpus*. Reed, who was a paymaster for the Navy, was found guilty of malfeasance by a general court-martial.[259] Before the Supreme Court he argued that as a civilian paymaster in the Navy, he was a civilian, like Milligan, and a court-martial lacked personal jurisdiction over him. The Court disagreed, citing both the historical importance of the paymaster position and Congress' intention via the navy regulations to subject paymasters to military jurisdiction. The Court held:

> The place of paymaster's clerk is an important one in the machinery of the navy. Their appointment must be approved by the commander of the ship. Their acceptance and agreement to submit to the laws and regulations for the government and discipline of the navy must be in writing, and filed in the department. They must take an oath, and bind themselves to serve until discharged. The discharge must be by the appointing power, and approved in

[255] *See* CHARLES WARREN, THE SUPREME COURT IN UNITED STATES HISTORY 423-49 (1962) (providing an excellent account of the debate that occurred during this time period).

[256] *See supra* notes 202-204 and accompanying text; *see also* NEELY, *supra* note 211, at 176-77 (stating that between April 1865 and January 1869 over 1400 military tribunals were held).

[257] *See, e.g.*, *Ex parte* McCardle, 74 U.S. (7 Wall.) 506 (1868); *Ex parte* Yerger, 75 U.S. (8 Wall.) 8 (1868); *see also* Glazier, *supra* note 11, at 2042, n.154.

[258] 100 U.S. 13 (1879).

[259] *Id.* at 21.

> the same manner as the appointment. They are required to wear the uniform of the service; they have a fixed rank; they are upon the payroll, and are paid accordingly. They may also become entitled to a pension and to bounty land.[260]

By holding that a congressionally established court-martial had jurisdiction over a civilian paymaster, the Court continued its general practice of deferring broadly to congressional interpretations of who should be subject to the Articles of War.[261] The Court brushed aside any notion that Congress' extension of jurisdiction might be unconstitutional by stating that "the constitutionality of the acts of Congress touching army and navy courts-martial in this country, if there could ever have been a doubt about it, is no longer an open question in this court."[262]

In 1890, the Supreme Court decided two cases about whether courts-martial had personal jurisdiction over Soldiers who were either too young or too old lawfully for service in the United States Army. In both cases, the Court again based its decision on whether

---

[260] *Id.* at 22-23.

[261] The *Reed* decision also confirmed the Court would follow the standard of review set forth in *Dynes v. Hoover* for *habeas* petitions. As a result, the Court would continue to limit its review of courts-martial merely to matters of technical jurisdiction and would not consider the merits of petitioner's claims. *Id.* at 32. The focus of this article is on two of those constitutional areas of technical jurisdiction, personal and subject matter jurisdiction. However, the Court also considered technical jurisdiction to include a statutory review that the court-martial was lawfully convened, and that the sentences were authorized by law. *See, e.g.*, McClaughry v. Deming, 186 U.S. 49, (1902) (holding that the Articles of War prohibited regular army officers from sitting on a court martial of volunteer army officers); Runkle v. United States, 122 U.S. 543 (1887) (holding that the dismissal of an officer at court-martial was improper because the Articles of War required the President's approval for the dismissal of a commissioned officer in time of peace). The following Supreme Court cases also support this standard of judicial review: Swaim v. United States, 165 U.S. 553, 555 (1897); United States v. Page, (1891); United States v. Fletcher (1893); Carter v. Roberts 177 U.S. 496, 498 (1900); Carter v. McClaughry, 183 U.S. 365, 380 (1902); Bishop v. United States, 197 U.S. 334, 342 (1905); Mullan v. United States, 212 U.S. 516, 520 (1909). For an excellent article discussing civil court review of court-martial see Rosen, *supra* note 70.

[262] *Reed*, 100 U.S. at 21.

Congress intended to assert jurisdiction over the accused and never considered constitutional restraints. In *Morrissey v. Perry*,[263] the petitioner enlisted in the Army when he was seventeen years old and was living with his mother who did not consent to his enlistment. Federal law at that time held that no person under the age of twenty-one could enlist in the military service of the United States without the written consent of his parents or guardians.[264] After serving a short time in the Army, Morrissey deserted and did not return until five years later, demanding that he be discharged from the army because he was a minor when he enlisted.[265] The Court disagreed and held that because his mother did not actively insist that she controlled her son's behavior, Morrissey's enlistment contract was valid. The Court stated that Morrissey "was not only de facto, but de jure, a Soldier—amenable to military jurisdiction. . . . His desertion and concealment for five years did not relieve him from his obligations as a soldier, or his liability to military control."[266]

Similarly, in *U.S. v. Grimley*,[267] the petitioner enlisted in the Army at the age of forty by lying to his recruiter and alleging that he was only twenty-eight years old. He subsequently deserted from the Army and was convicted for that offense at court-martial.[268] On a petition for *habeas* to the U.S. district court, the court ordered Grimley's release. The court held Grimley's enlistment void based on the fact that the Articles of War limited the

[263] 137 U.S. 157 (1890).

[264] *Id.* at 159.

[265] *Id.* at 158.

[266] *Id.* at 159-60.

[267] 137 U.S. 147 (1890).

[268] *Id.* at 149-50.

age of enlistment to people under the age thirty-five. The district court held that Grimley never became a Soldier, and was not subject to the jurisdiction of the court-martial.[269] The Supreme Court reversed this decision and held that "Grimley was sober, and of his own volition went to the recruiting office and enlisted. There was no compulsion, no solicitation, no misrepresentation. A man of mature years, he entered freely into the contract."[270] Because he freely entered into this enlistment contract, the Court held that, notwithstanding the Articles of War, Grimley became a Soldier and was subject to the jurisdiction of court-martial.[271]

A few years later, in *Johnson v. Sayne*,[272] another Navy paymaster challenged the jurisdiction of courts-martial, this time by arguing that the Constitution prohibited a court-martial from prosecuting him unless it was during time of war or national emergency. He based his argument on the Fifth Amendment, which prohibits a trial without a grand jury indictment "except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger."[273] A circuit court granted Johnson *habeas* relief, concluding that although a paymaster was a 'member of the naval forces' under the *Reed* decision, he was not in "actual service during time of war or public danger" as required

[269] *Id.* at 150. The circuit court upheld the district court's order to release Grimley.

[270] *Id.* at 151.

[271] *Id.* at 152.

[272] 158 U.S. 109 (1895).

[273] *Id.* at 113-14.

by the Fifth Amendment.[274] While acknowledging that the lower court's ruling was a linguistically plausible interpretation of the Fifth Amendment, the Supreme Court rejected that interpretation and instead held that members of the military were subject to the Articles of War at all times. Relying on the long historical practice of courts-martial, the Court held "the necessary construction is that the words, in this amendment, 'when in actual service in time of war or public danger' . . . apply to the militia only" and that active duty members are subject to the Articles of War at all times.[275] Therefore, because a paymaster was deemed a member of the active forces, he was still subject to court-martial in time of peace.[276]

In addition to broadly interpreting the personal jurisdiction of courts-martial, the Supreme Court gave military tribunals wide latitude in exercising subject matter jurisdiction over offenses arguably not authorized by the Articles of War. One excellent example is the case of *Ex parte Mason*.[277] Mason was an army sergeant who was assigned to guard President Garfield's alleged assassin. While on guard duty, Mason took matters into his own hands and avenged his Commander-in-Chief by shooting and killing the civilian prisoner.[278] The Articles of War in effect at the time prohibited the use of a court-martial to try the offense of murder (except in times of war). Therefore, Mason was court-martialed not for

[274] *Id.* at 114.

[275] *Id.* at 115.

[276] *Id.*

[277] 105 U.S. 696 (1882).

[278] *Id.* at 697.

murder, but instead for disobeying orders to guard the prisoner. Despite this unusual charging decision, the Court upheld Mason's conviction, explaining its opinion as follows:

> The gravamen of the military offence is that, while standing guard as a soldier over a jail in which a prisoner was confined, the accused willfully and maliciously attempted to kill the prisoner. Shooting with intent to kill is a civil crime, but shooting by a soldier of the army standing guard over a prison, with intent to kill a prisoner confined therein, is not only a crime against society, but an atrocious breach of military discipline. While the prisoner who was shot at was not himself connected with the military service, the soldier who fired the shot was on military duty at the time, and the shooting was in direct violation of the orders under which he was acting. It follows that the crime charged, and for which the trial was had, was not simply an assault with intent to kill, but an assault by a soldier on duty with intent to kill a prisoner confined in a jail over which he was standing guard.[279]

The Court interpreted the Articles of War to expand the subject matter jurisdiction of court-martial to cover offenses that were already criminalized in civilian law, and that were specifically withheld under the Articles of War, as long as the offense was styled as an offense prejudicial to good order and discipline.[280] Again, the Court based its opinion on statutory grounds and never addressed the issue of constitutional restraints.

In *Smith v. Whitney*,[281] another Navy paymaster challenged both the personal and subject matter jurisdiction of his court-martial. Smith alleged that a court-martial had no jurisdiction to try him because his position of Paymaster General is a purely separate job that

---

[279] *Id.* at 698.

[280] *See* Coleman v. Tennessee, 97 U.S. 509, 512-14 (1878) (holding that a soldier accused of murder during occupation of the South is subject to trial by court-martial and not the local state courts); Kurtz v. Moffitt, 115 U.S. 487 (1885) (holding that a peace officer had no authority, without the order of a military officer, to arrest or detain a deserter from the U.S. Army).

[281] 116 U.S. 167 (1886).

answers only to the civilian Secretary of the Navy.[282] Moreover, he argued that even if he was personally subject to court-martial jurisdiction, because his charged offenses took place off-duty in his personal capacity, they were outside the subject matter of the court-martial.[283] The Court reiterated its position in *Dynes* that "the jurisdiction of courts martial, under the articles for the government of the navy established by Congress, was not limited to the crimes defined or specified in those articles, but extended to any offence which, by a fair deduction from the definition, Congress meant to subject to punishment."[284] This means that a court-martial has subject-matter jurisdiction both over specified crimes and over other offenses that were recognized crimes throughout naval history. The Court went on to cite to British history that supported the proposition that a crime is still subject to trial by court-martial even when it has no other effect on the armed forces except for disgracing the military's reputation.[285] With this, the Court went well beyond *Mason*, which granted

---

[282] *Id.* at 181.

[283] *Id.* The accusations against Smith involved several business transactions. He was charged with several counts of "scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals," and "culpable inefficiency in the performance of duty." *Id.*

[284] *Id.* at 183.

[285] The Court cited a long section of English history to support this proposition. It stated:

> Two cases, often cited in books on military law, show that acts having no relation to the public service, military or civil, except so far as they tend to bring disgrace and reproach upon the former—such as making an unfounded claim for the price of a horse, or attempting to seduce a brother officer's wife during his illness—may properly be prosecuted before a court martial under an article of war punishing 'scandalous and infamous conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman;' for the sole ground on which the sentence was disapproved by the King in the one case, and by the Governor General of India in the other, was that the court martial, while finding the facts proved, expressly negatived scandalous and infamous conduct, and thereby in effect acquitted the defendant of the charge . . . In a third case, a lieutenant in the army was tried in England by a general court martial for conduct on board ship while coming home from India as a private passenger on leave of absence from his regiment for two years. The charge was that, being a passenger on board the ship Caesar on her voyage from Calcutta to England, he was accused of stealing property of one Ross, his servant; and that the officers and passengers of the ship, after inquiring into the accusation, expelled him from their

jurisdiction over a Soldier who murdered a civilian while performing his duty, and held that even private business transactions could be subject to court-martial jurisdiction if the scandalous conduct compromised one's position as a member of the Navy.[286] Again, the Court never addressed what limitation, if any, the Bill of Rights, or the Constitution, had on court-martial jurisdiction over these unspecified offenses.

Several conclusions can e drawn from the Supreme Court's decisions throughout the nineteenth century concerning the jurisdiction of military tribunals. The Supreme Court took a very deferential approach to the use of military jurisdiction and, in particular, of military courts-martial. With the striking exception of the *Milligan* decision, the Court found no constitutional limitations on the jurisdiction of military tribunals. In *Milligan*, the Court held that the Constitution prohibited a military tribunal from prosecuting a 'civilian' for any offense as long as constitutional courts were open. But, in other cases during this era, the Court upheld the personal jurisdiction of other 'civilians' like paymasters who were arguably not "members of the land and naval forces" under strict construction of the Constitution and

---

> table and society during the rest of the voyage; yet that he, 'under circumstances so degrading and disgraceful to him, neither then, nor at any time afterwards, took any measures as became an officer and a gentleman to vindicate his honor and reputation; all such conduct as aforesaid being to the prejudice of good order and military discipline.' Before and at the trial, he objected that the charge against him did not, expressly or constructively, impute any military offence, or infraction of any of the Articles of War, or any positive act of misconduct or neglect, to the prejudice of good order and military discipline; or state any fact which, if true, subjected him to be arraigned and tried as a military officer. But the court martial proceeded with the trial, found him 'guilty of the whole of the charge produced against him, in breach of the Articles of War,' and sentenced him to be dismissed from the service, and added, 'that it has considered the charge produced against the prisoner entirely in a military point of view, as affecting the good order and discipline of the army.'

Id. at 184-85 (citations omitted).

[286] *Id.* at 185-86.

the Articles of War. Similarly, the Court found no constitutional violations when military courts-martial prosecuted Soldiers for civilian common law offenses like murder and fraud. In fact, although these offenses were not specifically identified in the Articles of War, the Court found statutory authority for them when the crime was styled as a military offense. In deciding these courts-martial cases, the Court rarely considered whether the Constitution placed any limits on these uses of military jurisdiction. As long as military courts did not prosecute civilians, patently unrelated to the armed forces, the Court seemed content to let Congress, and the military commanders themselves, determine which people and what offenses were subject to military tribunal. One scholar, Clinton Rossiter, described the Supreme Court's military jurisprudence during this era more colorfully when he wrote "[T]he Court, feeling somewhat shamefaced for allowing itself to be dragged by the heels into heathen territory, has excused its presence by unnecessarily low bows."[287]

C. Military Tribunals from World War I through World War II

1. Authority and Use of Military Tribunals 1914-1950

Following Reconstruction, Congress did not significantly revise military jurisdiction until World War I. In 1916, Congress passed an appropriations bill that significantly modified the Articles of War. The 1916 Articles extended courts-martial jurisdiction over common-law crimes committed by soldiers during peacetime.[288] This marked a significant

[287] ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 104-05.

[288] Act of Aug 29, 1916, ch. 418, arts. 87-96, 39 Stat. 664-665 (1916).

change from previous legislation, which as discussed above, authorized military trials only for military offenses, or for common-law crimes committed by Soldiers "in times of war or rebellion"[289] when the threat to civilians was greatest and civilian courts failed to operate effectively and efficiently.[290] Despite this vast extension of courts-martial power, the 1916 Articles still maintained two significant restrictions on courts-martial jurisdiction. First commanding officers had to turn over military personnel accused of common-law crimes to civilian courts upon request of the victim.[291] This preserved the subordination of military courts-martial to civilian authority.[292] Second, jurisdiction extended only to those capital offenses committed outside the United States and beyond the reach of civilian courts.[293] Congress continued to reserve jurisdiction over capital crimes committed by service members in the United States to the appropriate state and federal courts. In addition to this expansion of subject matter jurisdiction, Congress statutorily authorized the use of military

---

[289] Act of Mar. 3, 1863, ch. 75, § 30, 12 Stat. 736 (1863).

[290] *See* Robert D. Duke & Howard S. Vogel, *The Constitution and the Standing Army: Another Problem of Court-Martial Jurisdiction*, 13 VAND. L. REV. 435, 450 (1960). Explaining the expansion of court-martial jurisdiction, they wrote:

> It appears the statute was intended not merely to ensure order and discipline among the men composing those forces, but to protect the citizens not in the military service from the violence of soldiers. It is a matter well known that the march even of an army not hostile is often accompanied with acts of violence and pillage by straggling parties of soldiers, which the most rigid discipline is hardly able to prevent. The offenses mentioned are those of the most common occurrence, and the swift and summary justice of a military court was deemed necessary to restrain their commission.

Id. (citations omitted).

[291] 39 Stat. 664 art. 74 (1916).

[292] WINTHROP, *supra* note 1, at 691.

[293] 39 Stat. 664 art. 92 (1916). Thus, even following the 1916 Articles civilian courts, not courts-martial maintained jurisdiction over capital crimes committed by service members in the United States. The one exception is that courts-martial were granted jurisdiction over capital crimes not committed on U.S. soil, presumably due to the need to have an available forum for those crimes committed abroad.

commissions. The 1916 Articles of War gave court-martial jurisdiction not only over soldiers subject to the Articles of War, but also over "any other person who by statute or the law of war is subject to trial by military commission."[294] As a result, a question arose as to whether Congress' expansion of court-martial jurisdiction eliminated the need for military commissions. In order to prevent that interpretation, the Army Judge Advocate General, Enoch Crowder, sought and gained statutory language ensuring the concurrent jurisdiction of courts-martial and military commissions.[295] The result was Article 15 of the 1916 Articles of War:

> Art. 15. NOT EXCLUSIVE—the provisions of these articles conferring jurisdiction upon courts-martial shall not be construed as depriving military commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals of concurrent jurisdiction in respect of offenders or offenses that by the law of war may be lawfully triable by such commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals.[296]

---

[294] *Id.* at 652, art. 12.

[295] In 1912, when the House was considering revising the Articles of War, General Crowder lobbied for a new article to "make it perfectly clear that in such cases the jurisdiction of the war court is concurrent" with that of a court-martial. *Revision of the Articles of War*, hearing before the House Committee on Military Affairs, 62d Cong., 2d Sess., at 29 (1912) (testimony of Brig. Gen. Enoch H. Crowder). When the Revised Articles went before the Senate in 1916, General Crowder supported the inclusion of Article 15 as follows: "a military commission is our common-law war court. It has no statutory existence, though it is recognized by statute law. . . . [Article 15] just saves to these war courts the jurisdiction they now have and makes it a concurrent jurisdiction with courts-martial, so that the military commander in the field in time of war will be at liberty to employ either form of court that happens to be convenient. Both classes of courts have the same procedure. S. REP. No. 64, 130, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., at 40 (1916) (testimony of Brig. Gen. Enoch H. Crowder). While General Crowder maintained that both courts-martial and military commissions have the same procedure that has not been the case throughout recent history. For an article discussing the historical differences in procedure between courts-martial and military commissions, *see generally* Glazier, *supra* note 11.

[296] 39 Stat. 653 art. 15 (1916).

Instead of expressly defining the jurisdiction of military commissions under their authority to "define and punish . . . Offenses against the Law of Nations",[297] Congress chose to recognize the law of war as providing a separate source of authority for military tribunals.

Following World War I, Congress debated the Articles of War and the practice and procedures of military tribunals.[298] This resulted in congressional enactment of the National Defense Act establishing the 1920 Articles of War.[299] The 1920 Articles of War added several procedural protections to courts-martial, such as a right to counsel,[300] a formalized legal procedure,[301] and establishment of a legal board of review.[302] The 1920 Articles also made some modifications to the use of military commissions. Article 15 was expanded to include not just offenders or offenses punishable "under the law of war," but also to include "offenders or offenses that *by statute* or by the law of war may be triable by military commission."[303] Additionally, the 1920 Articles directed how the President could promulgate rules for both courts-martial and military commissions.[304]

---

[297] U.S. CONST. Art. I, § 8, cl. 10.

[298] This debate about military reform resulted in a heated dispute between the Army Judge Advocate General, Brigadier General Crowder and his assistant Brigadier General Ansell. The best account of this very public debate is found in LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE, *supra* note 57, at 46-126.

[299] Act of June 4, 1920, ch. 227, 41 Stat. 759-812 (1921).

[300] *Id.* at 789 art. 11. Congress' decision to grant court-martial defendants the right to counsel was done well in advance of federal law. The Supreme Court did not recognize the right to counsel in other federal trials until 1938 and did not apply this right to state courts until 1960. *See* Johnson v. Zerbst, 304 U.S. 458 (1938); Gideon v. Wainwright, 372, U.S. 335 (1963).

[301] *Id.* at 793 art. 31.

[302] *Id.* at 797 art. 50 ½.

[303] *Id*. at 790 art. 15 (emphasis added). The complete article reads as follows:

While instances of abuse during World War I highlighted the need for reforming the Articles of War,[305] the use of military tribunals during the first half of the twentieth century was rather limited.[306] Courts-martial were used primarily against members of the Armed Forces. One famous court-martial that precipitated many of the calls for reform in 1920[307] resulted from the Fort Sam Houston "Mutiny." In this case, several black Soldiers, angered by racial injustice in Houston, took to the streets rioting and ended up killing fifteen white citizens from the local community.[308] The Army rounded up the suspected Soldiers, placed them in the military stockade, and tried them by general court-martial.[309] Following the

---

> Art. 15. JURISDICTION NOT EXCLUSIVE—The provisions of these articles conferring jurisdiction upon courts-martial shall not be construed as depriving military commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals of concurrent jurisdiction in respect of offenders or offenses that by statute or by the law of war may be lawfully triable by such commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals.

[304] *Id.* at 794 art. 38. Article 38 authorized the President to prescribe regulations for all military tribunals but directing that these regulations "in so far as he shall deem practicable, apply the rules of evidence generally recognized in the trial of criminal cases in the district courts of the United States" and that "nothing contrary or inconsistent with these articles shall so be prescribed." *Id.* While General Crowder and others had previously suggested that the rules for courts-martial and military commission were the same (and while that had often been the case throughout history) the 1920 Articles of War were the first statutory pronouncement that military commission procedures should be governed by the same rules as court martial. Military commentators support this view. *See* FREDERICK BERNAYS WIENER, A PRACTICE MANUEL OF MARTIAL LAW 124-25 (1940). In practice, following World War II this has not been the case and rules for military commissions have varied widely from the congressionally established rules. *See infra* Part IV D.

[305] *See* Herbert F. Margulies, *The Articles of War, 1920: The History of a Forgotten Reform*, 43 MIL. AFF. 85 (1979).

[306] *See* WILLIAM T. GENEROUS, JR., SWORDS AND SCALES 13 (1973) ("Following the 1919 burst of activity . . . the Army . . . settled back into a comfortable peacetime routine [and] court-martial systems were largely forgotten by the American population as a whole."); Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 32 ("After the Civil War, the United States made little use of military tribunals until World War II); Cox, *supra* note 40, at 10 ("The modern history of military justice can be traced to World War II.").

[307] THE ARMY LAWYER: A HISTORY OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS, 1775-1975, at 126 (1975) (arguing that no other event . . . portended such a vast change in the review of court-martial proceedings as the trial of black troopers . . . in late 1917.").

[308] *Id.* at 126.

[309] *Id.* at 127.

court-martial, thirteen of the black Soldiers were hanged the next day without any appellate review and before any higher headquarters were even informed of the verdict.[310]

Another significant military tribunal during World War I was the trial of Lothar Witzke. Witzke was a German national who was caught in America during World War I carrying a Russian passport. Witzke had traveled through Mexico before the military captured him in Arizona while making efforts to sabotage American targets.[311] The military brought him to Fort Sam Houston to be tried before a secret military court-martial. The court-martial convicted Witzke of spying and sentenced him to hang.[312] Despite the court-martial conviction, Attorney General Gregory concluded—in a secret opinion—that Witzke's court-martial was unconstitutional. He wrote:

> [M]ilitary tribunals, whether courts-martial or military commissions, cannot constitutionally be granted jurisdiction to try persons charged with acts or offenses committed outside of the field of military operations or territory under martial law or other peculiarly military territory, except members of the military [forces] or those immediately attached to the forces such as camp followers.[313]

[310] *Id.* at 126.

[311] HENRY LANDAU, THE ENEMY WITHIN: THE INSIDE STORY OF GERMAN SABOTAGE IN AMERICA 112-27 (1937).

[312] *Id.*

[313] 31 Op. Att'y Gen. 356 (1918).

In 1920, President Wilson commuted Witzke's sentence of death to life imprisonment based on the Attorney General's opinion.[314] Three years later, after Witzke rescued several inmates from a prison fire at the Fort Leavenworth prison, he was set free and returned to Germany. Germany greeted Witzke with a hero's welcome, and awarded him two citations of the Iron Cross.[315]

World War II brought about a drastic expansion of the military ranks[316] and an equally unprecedented expansion of the use of military tribunals. By the end of World War II, America had convened almost two million courts-martial, executed more than 100 Soldiers, and placed over 45,000 more Soldiers in federal prison.[317] All told, there were more than 60 general court-martial convictions for each and every day the war was fought.[318] These massive number of courts-martial proceedings brought during this era increased public awareness of, and concerns about, their deficiencies.[319] The court-martial of Lieutenant Shapiro is a commonly-cited example of court-martial abuses during World War II.[320] The

---

[314] *See* Charles H. Harris III & Louis R. Sadler, *The Witzke Affair: German Intrigue on the Mexican Border, 1917-18*, MIL. L. REV., 36, 46 (Feb. 1979). In still another remarkable twist in this strange case, during the Nazi saboteur trials of World War II defense counsel relied on the opinion of the attorney general in Witzke to argue that President Roosevelt's military commission was unconstitutional. In order to refute that claim, during the 1942 trial, the Justice Department released a previously unpublished opinion that appeared to overrule the attorney general and concluded that because Witzke was "found lurking as a spy" the military tribunal was constitutional. For a detailed discussion, see Fisher, *Military Tribunals*, *supra* note 116, at 36.

[315] *See* Harris & Sadler, *supra* note 314, at 46.

[316] *See* LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE, *supra* note 57, at 128 (noting that the military grew from just over 1 million personnel to more than 8,000,000).

[317] *See id.*

[318] GENEROUS, *supra* note 306, at 14.

[319] *See, e.g.*, LURIE, ARMING MILITARY JUSTICE, *supra* note 57, at 123; GENEROUS, *supra* note 306, at 15.

[320] GENEROUS, *supra* note 306, at 169-70; Cox, *supra* note 40, at 11-12.

Army assigned Shapiro to defend a Soldier charged with assault with intent to commit rape. Believing that his client could not be identified properly, Shapiro substituted another person for his client at counsel's table during the court-martial. After the accused identified the man sitting at the table as the perpetrator, Shapiro revealed his scheme. Still, the court-martial convicted Shapiro's real client and the Army court-martialed Shapiro himself for delaying the orderly progress of the previous court-martial.[321]

World War II also brought about the return of military commissions. During World War II, military commissions were used for all three commonly-articulated purposes: martial-law courts, military government courts, and law of war courts. Military commissions were first used shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, in order to prosecute civilians for both state and federal common-law crimes while Hawaii was under martial law.[322] The use of martial law was originally intended to last for only a short time, but in fact lasted for nearly three years.[323] Indeed, military courts continued to operate in Hawaii even after Hawaii's civil government had been restored and the danger of a Japanese

[321] Cox, *supra* note 40, at 12. The Court of Claims ultimately threw out the conviction on a suit to recover back pay; Brown v. United States, 69 F. Supp. 205 (Ct. Cl. 1947).

[322] J. GARNER ANTHONY, HAWAII UNDER ARMY RULE 1-33 (1975) (Publishing General Order Number 4 the same day that Pearl Harbor was attacked) Anthony reproduces a copy of General Order Number 4. *Id.* at 137.

[323] REHNQUIST, *supra* note 205, at 214 ("Military rule in Hawaii was not a short-run thing. It lasted nearly three years, until it was revoked in October 1944, by a proclamation from Roosevelt.").

land invasion no longer existed.[324] Only when the civil courts finally intervened in 1944, did martial law in Hawaii come to an end.[325]

Military commissions were also used extensively throughout World War II as military government courts. During and after the war, military government courts were used in Germany and Japan as well as throughout Europe and Asia by American and Allied forces.[326] These courts were of a scope and duration never previously witnessed in history.[327] American military government courts heard hundreds of thousands of cases in Germany alone.[328] Following World War II, military government courts became a significant presence throughout much of the world.

Military government courts were the most widely used type of military commission, but the most famous and controversial use of military commissions was the use of law of war commissions used during and after World War II. While there is no comprehensive list of the various different military commissions, the most famous included The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg (IMT), The International Military Tribunal for the Far East

[324] ANTHONY, *supra* note 322, at 58-59.

[325] *Id.* at 61. During this timeframe battles between military commanders and federal judges were reminiscent of the conflict between Andrew Jackson and Judge Hall. The most famous dispute involving General Richardson and Judge Metzger is recounted in Anthony' work. *Id* at 65-76. For a discussion of Duncan v. Kahanamoku, the Supreme Court case invalidating the continued exercise of martial law in Hawaii, see Part.4.2 *infra.*

[326] *See* Pitman B. Potter, *Legal Bases and Character of Military Occupation in Germany and Japan,* 43 AM. J. INT'L LAW 323 (1949). For a general discussion of military government courts see Charles Fairman, *Some Observations on Military Occupation,* 32 MINN. L. REV. 319 (1948).

[327] *See* Potter, *supra* note 326.

[328] Eli E. Nobleman, *Military Government Courts: Law and Justice in the American Zone of Germany,* 33 A.B.A. J. 777, 777-80 (1947).

(IMTFE), and The United States Military Tribunal at Nuremberg (NMT).[329] Following World War II, the United States alone tried over 3,000 defendants in Germany for war crimes and nearly 1000 more defendants in Japan and the rest of the Pacific.[330] All told, well over 25,000 people were tried for war crimes related to World War II[331]

In addition to their use in Hawaii during martial law, military commissions were used to try war criminals on two different occasions on the U.S. mainland. The first incident occurred in the summer of 1942 when Germans landed on Long Island Sound with plans to sabotage factories in Chicago and New York.[332] Within two weeks, the alleged saboteurs were rounded up and captured by the FBI. On July 2, 1942, President Theodore Roosevelt issued Proclamation 2561, establishing a military commission to try the Nazis in accordance with the law of war.[333] He also issued a military order appointing members of the tribunals and giving guidance to the court.[334] The military commission met from July 8 to August 1, 1942—and after a brief interlude in which the Supreme Court ruled that the military

---

[329] *See* WAR CRIMES, WAR CRIMINALS, AND WAR CRIMES TRIALS 5 (Norman E. Tutorow ed., 1981) [hereinafter WAR CRIMES] (listing these and various other courts used following WWII to prosecute war crimes).

[330] *Id.* at 5-6.

[331] *Id.*

[332] Several excellent books and articles have been written on this single famous case. *See generally* LOUIS FISHER, NAZI SABOTEURS ON TRIAL 19 (2003) [hereinafter FISHER, NAZI SABOTEURS]; G.E. White, *Felix Frankfurter's 'Soliloquy'* in Ex Parte Quirin: *Nazi Sabotage & Constitutional Conundrum*, 5 GREEN BAG 2d 423 (2002); Michael R. Belknap, *The Supreme Court Goes to War: The Meaning and Implications of the Nazi Saboteur Case*, 89 MIL. L. REV. 9 (1980); EUGENE RACHLIS, THEY CAME TO KILL: THE STORY OF EIGHT NAZI SABOTEURS IN AMERICA (1962); R.E. Cushman, *The Case of the Nazi Saboteurs*, 36 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 1082 (1942); General Myron C. Cramer, *Military Commissions: Trial of the Eight Saboteurs*, 17 WASH. L. REV. & STATE BR J. 247 (1942).

[333] 7 Fed. Reg. 5103 (1942).

[334] *Id.*

commission had proper jurisdiction[335]—the commission found all eight men guilty and sentenced them to death.[336] In 1944, two more Nazi saboteurs landed on the eastern American coast and were again captured by the FBI.[337] They were also tried by military commission and sentenced to death. However, in ordering this military commission President Roosevelt significantly modified the order from the earlier Nazi trial, making the procedures in the second case much more consistent with the procedures of the Articles of War.[338]

2. Supreme Court Review of Military Tribunals 1914-1950

As noted above, during World War I, congressional legislation converted a civilian into a "member of the armed forces" as soon as he received his draft notice and before he was even inducted into the military.[339] The Supreme Court heard many cases challenging this military conscription as unlawful,[340] but the Court never ruled on the constitutionality of prosecuting these draftees before a military tribunal instead of in civil court. During World War I the Court heard very few cases concerning the jurisdiction of military courts. In the

[335] *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1, 18-19 (1942). This decision was a *per curiam* opinion handed down orally by the Court on July 31, 1942. The Court published a full written opinion three months later explaining their decision. This case is discussed in further detail *infra* Part IV.C.2.

[336] FISHER, NAZI SABOTEURS, *supra* note 332, at 109-21.

[337] *Id.* at 138-44. Interestingly one of those two Germans spies wrote a book on this experience that was recently published in America. *See* AGENT 146: THE TRUE STORY OF NAZI SPY IN AMERICA (2003).

[338] 10 Fed. Reg. 548 (1945).

[339] Selective Service Act of 1917, 40 Stat 76.

[340] *See* Selective Draft Law Cases, 245 U.S. 366 (1918) (holding that Congress has the power to compel people into involuntarily military service).

post World War I era, the first military tribunal case to reach the Supreme Court was a *habeas corpus* petition brought by several military prisoners. Appellants in *Kahn v. Anderson*[341] were several dishonorably-discharged prisoners who were court-martialed for murder while they were serving prison time in the military disciplinary barracks. The prisoners argued that the court-martial lacked personal jurisdiction over them because they were already discharged from the military and were no longer members of the armed forces. Thus, trial by court-martial denied the accused their right to a trial by jury and their other Fifth and Sixth Amendment protections.[342] They also argued that the court-martial lacked subject matter jurisdiction because the Articles of War prohibited trial for the offense of murder during time of peace.[343]

The Court relied on congressional statute declaring the prisoners subject to military jurisdiction. In upholding the convictions, the Court stated "as they remained military prisoners, they were for that reason subject to military law and trial by court-martial for offenses committed during such imprisonment."[344] Interestingly, the Court again neglected potential constitutional limitations on Congress' ability to subject prisoners who were no longer members of the armed forces to military trial. The Court essentially implied the opposite and stated that Congress might be empowered to subject anyone they wish to military tribunals:

---

[341] 255 U.S. 1 (1921).

[342] *Id.* at 7-8.

[343] *Id.*

[344] *Id.* at 8.

> [W]e observe that a further contention, that, conceding the accused to have been subject to military law, they could not be tried by a military court because Congress was without power to so provide consistently with the guaranties as to jury trial and presentment or indictment by grand jury, respectively secured by Art. I, § 8, [Art. III, § 2,] of the Constitution, and Art. V, [and Art. VI,] of the Amendments—is also without foundation, since it directly denies the existence of a power in Congress exerted from the beginning, and disregards the numerous decisions of this court by which its exercise has been sustained.[345]

Moreover, the Court rejected the petitioners' subject matter jurisdiction complaint, declaring "complete peace, in the legal sense, had not come to pass by the effect of the Armistice and the cessation of hostilities."[346]

While the Supreme Court rarely addressed the issue of military jurisdiction following World War I, the beginning of World War II once again brought the issue to the forefront. The Supreme Court's decision in *Ex Parte Quirin*,[347] ranks with *Milligan* as among the Court's most significant pronouncements on the boundaries of military jurisdiction. The *Quirin* case involved the trial of eight German saboteurs who covertly entered the United States under the direction of the German army to blow up factories and bridges. While all eight were born in Germany and were German citizens, one of the accused alleged that he was also a U.S. citizen by virtue of his parents' naturalization.[348] A military commission

---

[345] *Id.*

[346] *Id.* at 10. For other World War I jurisdiction cases, *see also* Givens v. Zerbst, 255 U.S. 11 (1921) (upholding courts-martial jurisdiction even though the record did not demonstrate that the accused was a member of the armed forces); Collins v. Macdonald, 258 U.S. 416 (1922) (broadly construing the subject matter jurisdiction of courts-martial to include offenses not defined by federal statute).

[347] 317 U.S. 1 (1942).

[348] *Id* at 20-21. The government rejected that he was a U.S. citizen because after becoming an adult he elected to maintain German citizenship and in any case renounced or abandoned his United States citizenship. *Id.* at 21.

prosecuted the for the crimes of violating the law of war, conspiracy, and violating the Articles of War by aiding the enemy, and spying.[349] Before conclusion of the commission, the Supreme Court granted a petition for *certiorari* and issued a *per curiam* opinion from the bench. The Court's short oral opinion denied a request to file a *habeas* petition and held that the saboteurs were clearly subject to the jurisdiction of the military commission.[350] The military trial resumed, convicted all eight men, and sentenced them to death. President Roosevelt executed six of the accused before the Court published its written opinion.[351]

The Court's published opinion made several import findings concerning the jurisdiction of military courts. First and foremost, it recognized that the Constitution does indeed provide some limits on the use of military tribunals and asserted that "Congress and the President, like the courts, possess no power not derived from the Constitution."[352] The Court then reviewed congressional legislation and determined that by passing Article 15 of the Articles of War, Congress had given the President authorization to convene military tribunals in accordance with the law of war. The Court recognized:

> [By] reference in the 15th Article of War to 'offenders or offenses that . . . by the law of war may be triable by such military commissions,' Congress has

[349] *Id.* at 23. For greater background on these cases see *supra* notes 332 and 336 and accompanying text.

[350] *Id.* at 18-19.

[351] For one of several thoughtful arguments suggesting that the President's decision to hastily execute the prisoners influenced the Court's opinion, see FISHER, NAZI SABOTEURS *supra* note 332 at 109-21; s*ee also* EDWARD S. CORWIN, TOTAL WAR AND THE CONSTITUTION (1947). For a more recent, and perhaps more significant indictment of *Quirin* see Justice Scalia's recent opinion in Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, 124 S. Ct. 2633, 2669 (2004) (declaring *Quirin* "was not this Court's finest hour" and seeking to limit its influence) (Scalia, J., dissenting).

[352] *Quirin*, 317 U.S. at 25.

> incorporated by reference, as within the jurisdiction of military commissions, all offenses which are defined as such by the law of war and which may constitutionally be included within that jurisdiction.[353]

The Court continued:

> By the Articles of War, and especially Article 15, Congress has explicitly provided, so far as it may constitutionally do so, that military tribunals shall have jurisdiction to try offenders or offenses against the law of war in appropriate cases. Congress, in addition to making rules for the government of our Armed Forces, has thus exercised its authority to define and punish offenses against the law of nations by sanctioning, within constitutional limitations, the jurisdiction of military commissions to try persons for offenses which, according to the rules and precepts of the law of nations, and more particularly the law of war, are cognizable by such tribunals. And the President, as Commander in Chief, by his Proclamation in time of war has invoked that law. By his Order creating the present Commission he has undertaken to exercise the authority conferred upon him by Congress, and also such authority as the Constitution itself gives the Commander in Chief, to direct the performance of those functions which may constitutionally be performed by the military arm of the nation in time of war.[354]

The Court made clear that it was not determining whether the President could constitutionally convene military commissions without congressional support, because under the facts in *Quirin* (unlike *Milligan*), Congress had given the President the power to use military commissions in accordance with the law of war "so far as it may constitutionally do so."[355] Therefore, the question before the Court was whether the Constitution permitted

[353] *Id.* at 30.

[354] *Id.* at 28.

[355] *Id.* at 28.

these petitioners to be tried before a military commission for the offenses with which they were charged.

The Court then turned to the subject matter and personal jurisdiction of military tribunals. First, the Court looked to whether the charged crimes were violations of the law of war that were within the subject matter jurisdiction of military tribunals. The Court concluded quite easily that at least some of the charged offenses were war crimes:

> The law of war draws a distinction between the armed forces and the peaceful populations of belligerent nations and also between those who are lawful and unlawful combatants. Lawful combatants are subject to capture and detention as prisoners of war by opposing military forces. Unlawful combatants are likewise subject to capture and detention, but in addition they are subject to trial and punishment by military tribunals for acts which render their belligerency unlawful. The spy who secretly and without uniform passes the military lines of a belligerent in time of war, seeking to gather military information and communicate it to the enemy, or an enemy combatant who without uniform comes secretly through the lines for the purpose of waging war by destruction of life or property, are familiar examples of belligerents who are generally deemed not to be entitled to the status of prisoners of war, but to be offenders against the law of war subject to trial and punishment by military tribunals.[356]

[356] *Id*. at 30-31. While the Court held that the first charge alleging law of war violations was within the subject matter jurisdiction of military tribunals, the Court declined to specify whether the remaining charges were proper. The Court stated:

> Specification 1 of the first charge is sufficient to charge all the petitioners with the offense of unlawful belligerency, trial of which is within the jurisdiction of the Commission, and the admitted facts affirmatively show that the charge is not merely colorable or without foundation. Specification 1 states that petitioners, 'being enemies of the United States and acting for . . . the German Reich, a belligerent enemy nation, secretly and covertly passed, in civilian dress, contrary to the law of war, through the military and naval lines and defenses of the United States . . . and went behind such lines, contrary to the law of war, in civilian dress . . . for the purpose of committing . . . hostile acts, and, in particular, to destroy certain war industries, war utilities and war materials within the United States.' This specification so plainly alleges violation of the law of war as to require but brief discussion of petitioners' contentions.

After addressing subject matter jurisdiction, the Court turned to the issue of the personal jurisdiction of the military tribunal and whether these individuals should be entitled to an Article III constitutional court, which would provide a trial by jury and other Fifth and Sixth Amendment protections. The Court again looked to history and determined that because the Continental Congress had authorized military trials for enemy spies contemporaneously with the Constitution, the Constitution did not preclude military trials of all offenses against the law of war.[357] The Court held that "because they had violated the law of war by committing offenses," they were "constitutionally triable by military commission."[358]

The Court did not ignore *Milligan*, which held that the military commissions 'can never be applied to citizens . . . where the courts are open and their process unobstructed."[359] *Milligan* was especially significant because the *Quirin* Court chose not to resolve the question of whether one of the accused saboteurs was a U.S. citizen[360] Instead of overruling *Milligan*, or following it, the Court distinguished it. The Court reasoned the accused in *Milligan* was a twenty-year resident of Indiana, not part of enemy armed forces, and was

---

Id. at 37. The remaining three charges that the Court did not address were: Violation of Article 81 of the Articles of War (relieving or attempting to relieve, or corresponding with or giving intelligence to the enemy); Violation of Article 82 (spying); and Conspiracy to commit the offenses alleged in charges 1, 2 and 3.

[357] *Id.* at 41-44.

[358] *Id.* at 44.

[359] *Id*. at 45.

[360] *Id.* at 21 ("We do not find it necessary to resolve these contentions.").

therefore "a non-belligerent, not subject to the law of war."[361] The Court stressed the limitations of its opinion:

> We have no occasion now to define with meticulous care the ultimate boundaries of the jurisdiction of military tribunals to try persons according to the law of war. It is enough that petitioners here, upon the conceded facts, were plainly within those boundaries. . . .We hold only that those particular acts constitute an offense against the law of war which the Constitution authorizes to be tried by military commission.[362]

The *Quirin* case was easily the most significant case to come out of the World War II era but it was far from the only one. In *Billings v. Truesdell*,[363] the Court answered the question raised during World War I of whether courts-martial had personal jurisdiction over draftees. Billings was a conscientious objector who refused to participate in military in-processing.[364] He was charged and convicted by court-martial for failing to follow orders.[365] On petition for *habeas corpus*, he argued that the court-martial lacked personal jurisdiction over him as a draftee. The Supreme Court agreed, holding that because the plaintiff had not been inducted into the Army he could not be subject to court-martial, and must be prosecuted in civil court.[366] Again, the Court based its opinion on congressional legislation, not the

---

[361] *Id.* at 45. The Court declined to explain why Milligan was a "non-belligerent" instead of an "unlawful belligerent" giving aid to the Confederate army in its war against the United States. That reading would place Milligan in exactly the same status as the accused in *Quirin*.

[362] *Id.* at 45-46.

[363] 321 U.S. 542 (1944).

[364] *Id.* at 544-45.

[365] *Id.*

[366] *Id.* at 552.

language of the Constitution. Following the many challenges to induction laws during World War I,[367] Congress changed the Selective Service Act to grant a court-martial jurisdiction over only those individuals who were already inducted into the armed services. The Act provided that draftees, who had not yet been inducted into the military, were to be prosecuted in civil court.[368] While the Court asserted that there "was no doubt of the power of Congress to . . . subject to military jurisdiction those who are unwilling . . . to come to the defense of their nation,"[369] because "Congress has drawn the line between civil and military jurisdiction it is our duty to respect it."[370] The Court's dicta in *Billings* indicated that Congress could constitutionally subject draftees to a military court, but *Billing's* holding limited court-martial jurisdiction over draftees on statutory grounds.

Two years later, the Court again relied on a congressional statute to limit the jurisdiction of military courts, but in this instance with more significant constitutional implications. *Duncan v. Kahanamoku*[371] involved two civilians who were prosecuted by military tribunal while the Hawaiian Islands were under martial law following the attack at Pearl Harbor.[372] Congress had previously authorized the use of martial law in Hawaii with the *Hawaiian Organic Act*, which authorized the governor of Hawaii to declare martial law

---

[367] *See supra* note 340 and accompanying text.

[368] *See* Section 11 of The Selective Service Act of 1940, 54 Stat. 894 (codified at 50 U.S.C. 311).

[369] *Id.* at 556.

[370] *Id.* at 559.

[371] 327 U.S. 304 (1946).

[372] *Id.* at 307-08. *See also supra* notes 322-325 and accompanying text.

during times of rebellion, invasion, or imminent danger.[373] Pursuant to this congressional authorization, the governor established martial law and the military established military tribunals to replace the civilian court system.[374] Military tribunals prosecuted two civilians, Mr. Duncan, and Mr. White, for civilian crimes several months after imposition of martial law.[375] Both men challenged the jurisdiction of the military tribunals to prosecute them by arguing that as civilians charged with civilian offenses they had a right to be prosecuted in a constitutional court with all of the protections of the Bill of Rights.[376] The Court agreed and held that when Congress authorized "martial law" it did not "declare that the governor in conjunction with the military could for days, months or years close all the courts and supplant them with military tribunals."[377] In reaching the decision, the Court determined that the *Organic Act* and its legislative history failed to state that 'martial law' in Hawaii included the replacement of civil courts with military tribunals.[378] The Court relied on the Founding Fathers' desire to subordinate the military to society in determining that "courts and their procedural safeguards are indispensable to our system of government."[379] In accordance with those founding principles, the Court concluded that absent specific language stating otherwise, Congress must not have intended the *Organic Act* to supplant the civil courts with

[373] *Duncan*, 327 U.S. at 307-08; *see also* Section 67 of the Hawaiian Organic Act, 31 Stat. 141, 153, n1.

[374] *Duncan*, 327 U.S. at 308.

[375] Duncan was prosecuted for assault and White was prosecuted for stock embezzling. *Id.* at 309-10.

[376] *Id.* at 310.

[377] *Id.* at 315.

[378] *Id.* at 317. The Court reached this decision despite the fact that the Hawaii Supreme Court had previously addressed this issue and had, in fact, held that martial law did allow for replacement of civil courts with military tribunals. *Id*.

[379] *Id.* at 322.

military tribunals.[380] While technically the Court's decision was only a statutory interpretation, it had constitutional implications. It asserted that the President and the military could not establish military commissions—even during times of congressionally-declared martial law—in the absence of more specific congressional authorization.[381]

In 1946, the Supreme Court also decided *In re Yamashita*,[382] another case defining the jurisdiction of military tribunals. Yamashita was a commanding general of the Japanese army in the Philippine Islands during World War II.[383] After his surrender, he was held as a prisoner of war until General MacArthur directed Yamashita's prosecution by military tribunal for the war crime of failing to prevent his troops from committing atrocities.[384] The commission convicted Yamashita and sentenced him to death by hanging.[385] On petition for

---

[380] *Id.* at 324. Justice Murphy addressed the constitutional issue in his concurring opinion stating: "Equally obvious, as I see it, is the fact that these trials were forbidden by the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States." *Id*. at 325 (Murphy, J, concurring).

[381] Charles Fairman articulated it best when he wrote:

> While the decision is technically only a construction of statutory language, we may take it that it would be the view of the Justices who joined in it that a commander who has to act without any specific statute on which to rely will be constitutionally restrained by those principles which the Court finds applicable to the interpretation of this statute. Indeed, as construed, the statute authorized nothing more than could have been sustained without it.

Charles Fairman, *The Supreme Court on Military Jurisdiction: Martial Rule in Hawaii and the* Yamashita *Case*, 59 HARV. L. REV. 833, 855 (1946).

[382] 327 U.S. 1 (1946).

[383] *Id.* at 5. For a detailed description of the case see J. Gordon Feldhaus, *The Trial of Yamashita,* 15 S. DAK. B. J. 181 (1946). For an overview of the thousands of allied trials in the far east see PHILIP R. PICCIGALLO, THE JAPANESE ON TRIAL: ALLIED WAR CRIMES OPERATIONS IN THE EAST 1945-1951 (1979); THE YAMASHITA PRESIDENT: WAR CRIMES AND COMMAND RESPONSIBILITY 71 (1982).

[384] *Yamashita,* 327 U.S. at 5.

[385] *Id*. at 5. Interestingly, twelve international war correspondents covering the trial took a vote and voted 12 to zero that Yamashita should have been acquitted. *See* PICCIGALLO, *supra* note 383, at 57.

habeas corpus,[386] the defense raised many challenges to the subject matter jurisdiction of the military tribunal arguing in part that military commissions could not try law of war violations after hostilities had ended, and that the actual charge against General Yamashita failed to allege any violation of the law of war. The petition also raised several due process claims.[387]

The Supreme Court first cited to *Quirin* and Article 15 as Congress' authorization for the President to use military commissions to punish war crimes pursuant to its constitutional power to "define and punish . . . Offences against the Law of Nations."[388] The Supreme Court had no difficulty finding that international law allowed the use of military

[386] The *habeas* petition originally went before the Philippine Supreme Court but after they ruled they lacked authority over the U.S. Army who convened the tribunal, the U.S. Supreme Court elected to hear the case. *Yamashita*, 327 U.S. at 6.

[387] The actual issues raised by the defense were as follows:

> (a) That the military commission which tried and convicted petitioner was not lawfully created, and that no military commission to try petitioner for violations of the law of war could lawfully be convened after the cessation of hostilities between the armed forces of the United States and Japan;
>
> (b) That the charge preferred against petitioner fails to charge him with a violation of the law of war;
>
> (c) That the commission was without authority and jurisdiction to try and convict petitioner because the order governing the procedure of the commission permitted the admission in evidence of depositions, affidavits and hearsay and opinion evidence, and because the commission's rulings admitting such evidence were in violation of the 25th and 38th Articles of War and the Geneva Convention, and deprived petitioner of a fair trial in violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment;
>
> (d) That the commission was without authority and jurisdiction in the premises because of the failure to give advance notice of petitioner's trial to the neutral power representing the interests of Japan as a belligerent as required by Article 60 of the Geneva Convention.

Id. at 6-7.

[388] *Id.* at 7.

commissions following the end of hostilities.[389] The defense's next contention was that because the charges against Yamashita did not claim that he either "committed or directed" anyone to perform atrocities, he could not be charged with committing a war crime.[390] While the Court recognized that the charges against Yamashita must allege a violation of the law of war in order to be consistent within Congress' mandate, the Court held that the charges met that burden. Under various international law agreements, commanders are "to some extent responsible for their subordinates," and thus the charge that Yamashita unlawfully disregarded and failed to control the members of his command "tested by any reasonable standard, adequately alleges a violation of the law of war."[391]

Following *Yamashita*, the Supreme Court distanced itself from the role of reviewing the jurisdiction of overseas military tribunals. In two cases, *Hiroto v. MacArthur*,[392] and

[389] In supporting this conclusion, the Court noted that "[n]o writer on international law appears to have regarded the power of military tribunals . . . as terminating before the formal state of war has ended." *Id*. at 7. The Court further identified that "in our own military history there have been numerous instances in which offenders were tried by military commission after the cessation of hostilities and before the proclamation of peace, for offenses against the law of war." *Id*. Of course following the Civil War the Court had rejected the trial of Milligan by military commission.

[390] *Id*. at 13.

[391] *Id*. at 15, 17. Justice Murphy vehemently disagreed with this assessment in his dissent and argued that international law made no attempt to "define the duties of a commander." *Id*. at 35-36. In addition, Justice Murphy and Justice Rutledge both issued lengthy impassioned dissents arguing that the procedures of the military trial against Yamashita grossly violated the Articles of War and due process clause of the Constitution. *See id*. at 26-41 (Murphy, J, dissenting); 41-83 (Rutledge, J., dissenting). In fact, subsequent studies and experiences during the Vietnam War have generally rejected the principle that a commander's negligence can subject him to prosecution of war crimes. Instead, it has generally been concluded that a commander must have actual knowledge of his subordinates' action to be guilty of a law of war violation. *See, e.g.*, Franklin A. Hart, *Yamashita, Nuremberg and Vietnam*: *Command Responsibility Reappraised*, 25 NAVAL WAR COLL. REV. 19, 30 (1972); William H. Parks, *Command Responsibility for War Crimes*, 62 MIL. L. REV. 1 (1973).

[392] 338 U.S. 197 (1948).

Johnson v. Eisentrager,[393] the Court held that it lacked the authority to affect the judgments of these overseas military courts. *Hiroto* involved General Macarthur's prosecution of Japanese war criminals by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFA). While MacArthur was the U.S. commanding general in the Far East, he had also been appointed the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, which had established the IMTFA.[394] In a 6-1 decision the Supreme Court held that the IMTFA military tribunal was "not a tribunal of the United States" and therefore "the courts of the United States have no power or authority to review, to affirm, set aside or annul the judgments and sentences imposed on these petitioners."[395]

Similarly, *Eisentrager* presented the Court with a *habeas* petition from twenty-one German nationals who were convicted by an American military tribunal in China. The Germans were convicted of violating the laws of war by providing intelligence on U.S. forces to the Japanese after the surrender of Germany but before surrender of Japan.[396] While the petitioners relied on *Quirin* and *Yamashita* to support their petition for *habeas corpus*, the Court distinguished these two cases. In *Quirin* and *Yamashita*, the accused were both in the physical territory (either actual or occupied) of the United States.[397] In *Eisentrager*, the petitioners were enemy aliens who had never been in the United States, who were captured

[393] 339 U.S. 763 (1950).

[394] *Hirota*, 338 U.S. at 198.

[395] *Id.* at 198; *see also* Homma v. Patterson, 327 U.S. 759 (1946); Milch v. U.S., 332 U.S. 789 (1947) (denying requests for *habeas* despite dissents from Justices Murphy and Rutledge and requests by four justices to hear oral arguments on the issue of jurisdiction).

[396] *Eisentrager*, 339 U.S. at 775-76.

[397] *Id.* at 779-80.

and held as prisoners of war outside U.S. territory, and were tried, convicted, and imprisoned for war crimes by a Military Commission sitting outside the United States.[398] As such, the Court held that these "nonresident enemy alien[s], especially one who has remained in the service of the enemy," do not have the right to file *habeas* petitions in United States courts.[399]

During the post-war period, the Court addressed other cases affecting the jurisdiction of military commissions. For example, in *Hirshberg v. Cooke*,[400] the Court held that a court-martial lacked personal jurisdiction over a sailor who was accused of abusing Japanese prisoners of war during a previous enlistment, from which he was honorably discharged.[401] The Court cited congressional language and longstanding practice of the military in holding that the military lacked authority to court-martial a Soldier for an offense committed in a prior enlistment ended by honorable discharge, despite the fact that he subsequently reenlisted.[402]

In sum, during the era between World War I and World War II, the Court directly addressed the constitutional limitations on military jurisdiction for the first time since *Milligan*. In two instances, the Court explicitly upheld the constitutionality of prosecuting

---

[398] *Id.* at 776.

[399] *Id.*

[400] 336 U.S. 210 (1949).

[401] *Id.* at 211.

[402] *Id.* at 218-19. For other relevant Supreme Court cases on the military during this timeframe see Wade v. Hunter, 336 U.S. 684 (1949) (limiting the application of double jeopardy in the military); Whelchel v. MacDonald, 340 U.S. 122, 127 (1950) (holding that the military tribunal did not lose jurisdiction by its failure to address the soldier's possible insanity at the time of the offense); Hiatt v. Brown, 339 U.S. 103 (1950) (limiting a civil court's ability to review a military court's compliance with the Due Process Clause).

conceded enemy combatants for war crimes by military tribunals in accordance with congressional legislation. However, the Court refused to uphold the use of military jurisdiction in Hawaii despite the congressional acknowledgement of martial law. Unlike *Milligan*, the Court's decisions in this era made no attempt to assert a bright-line rule, or develop a methodology for determining the constitutional boundaries of military tribunals. The Court left the military jurisdiction precedents intact, and constrained their holdings as much as possible to the specific facts before them in each case. Thus, while the Court decided several cases concerning the constitutional limits on military jurisdiction, these lessons are exceedingly difficult to apply.

D. Military Tribunals from Enactment of the UCMJ to Present

1. Authority and Use of Military Tribunals 1950-2004

Following World War II, America embarked on the most thorough and comprehensive review of military law in U.S. history. Outrage over the abuses of the military justice system[403] coupled with extensive publicity on the issue resulted in repeated calls for reform.[404] Multiple blue-ribbon panels and public interest groups like the American Bar Association and the American Legion lobbied pushing for reform of the Articles of War and military justice.[405] As a result of these calls for reform, Congress passed the Uniform

[403] *See infra* Section 4.C.1.

[404] *See, e.g.*, LURIE, MILITARY JUSTICE IN AMERICA, *supra* note 82, at 76-88.

[405] *See* Cox, *supra* note 40, at 3.

Code of Military Justice (UCMJ),[406] which radically altered the use of military tribunals and the entire system of military justice.[407] In addition to establishing uniform law for all of the services, and establishing a civilian court of review,[408] the UCMJ substantially expanded the jurisdiction of military courts-martial. The UCMJ extended the personal jurisdiction of courts-martial to include many people previously not subject to military justice, including discharged Soldiers, contractors, and retirees.[409] The new code also expanded the subject-

[406] *See* Act of May 5, 1950, Uniform Code of Military Justice, Pub. L. No 810506, 64 Stat. 107 (1950). Actually, the first Congressional action was passage the 1948 Elston Act, see Selective Service Act of 1948, Pub. L. No. 80-759, 201-49, 62 Stat. 604 (1949). However, this Act was a short-term measure that was superseded two years later by Congress' passage of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. As a result, this paper focuses on the UCMJ.

[407] For a detailed history and background of the UCMJ see LURIE, PURSUING MILITARY JUSTICE, *supra* note 82, and other sources cited *supra* note 80.

[408] UCMJ art. 67 (2002).

[409] *Id.* arts. 2-3. These articles state:

> ART. 2. PERSONS SUBJECT TO THIS CHAPTER
>
> (a) The following persons are subject to this chapter:
>
> (1) Members of a regular component of the armed forces, including those awaiting discharge after expiration of their terms of enlistment; volunteers from the time of their muster or acceptance into the armed forces; inductees from the time of their actual induction into the armed forces; and other persons lawfully called or ordered into, or to duty in or for training in the armed forces, from the dates when they are required by the terms of the call or order to obey it.
>
> (2) Cadets, aviation cadets, and midshipman.
>
> (3) Members of a reserve component while on inactive-duty training, but in the case of members of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States only when in Federal Service.
>
> (4) Retired members of a regular component of the armed forces who are entitled to pay.
>
> (5) Retired members of a reserve component who are receiving hospitalization from an armed force.
>
> (6) Members of the Fleet Reserve and Fleet Marine Corps Reserve.
>
> (7) Persons in custody of the armed forces serving a sentence imposed by a court-martial.

(8) Members of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Public Health Service, and other organizations, when assigned to and serving with the armed forces.

(9) Prisoners of war in custody of the armed forces.

(10) In time of war, persons serving with or accompanying an armed force in the field.

(11) Subject to any treaty or agreement which the United States is or may be a party to any accepted rule of international law, persons serving with, employed by, or accompanying the armed forces outside the United States and outside the Canal Zone, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

(12) Subject to any treaty or agreement which the United States is or may be a party to any accepted rule of international law, persons within an area leased by or otherwise reserved or acquired for use of the United States which is under the control of the Secretary concerned and which is outside the United States and outside the Canal Zone, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

(b) The voluntary enlistment of any person who has the capacity to understand the significance of enlisting in the armed forces shall be valid for purposes of jurisdiction under subsection (a) and change of status from civilian to member of the armed forces shall be effective upon the taking of the oath of enlistment.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person serving with an armed force who--

(1) Submitted voluntarily to military authority;

(2) met the mental competence and minimum age qualifications of sections 504 and 505 of this title at the time of voluntary submissions to military authority:

(3) received military pay or allowances; and

(4) performed military duties: is subject to this chapter until such person's active service has been terminated in accordance with law or regulations promulgated by the Secretary concerned.

(d)

(1) A member of a reserve component who is not on active duty and who is made the subject of proceedings under section 815 (article 15) or section 830 (article 30) with respect to an offense against this chapter may be ordered to active duty involuntary for the purpose of--

(A) investigation under section 832 of this title (article 32);

(B) trial by court-martial; or

(C) non judicial punishment under section 815 of this title (article 15).

(2) A member of a reserve component may not be ordered to active duty under paragraph (1) except with respect to an offense committed while the member was

(A) on active duty; or

matter jurisdiction of courts-martial to cover all peacetime common-law crimes including capital crimes like murder and rape even if the crime had no military nexus.[410] In addition,

---

> (B) on inactive-duty training, but in the case of members of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States only when in Federal service.
>
> (3) Authority to order a member to active duty under paragraph (1) shall be exercised under regulations prescribed by the President.
>
> (4) A member may be ordered to active duty under paragraph (1) only by a person empowered to convene general courts-martial in a regular component of the armed forces.
>
> (5) A member ordered to active duty under paragraph (1), unless the order to active duty was approved by the Secretary concerned, may not--
>
> (A) be sentenced to confinement; or
>
> (B) be required to serve a punishment of any restriction on liberty during a period other than a period of inactive-duty training or active duty (other than active duty ordered under paragraph (1)).
>
> ART. 3. JURISDICTION TO TRY CERTAIN PERSONNEL
>
> (a) Subject to section 843 of this title (article 43), no person charged with having committed, while in a status in which he was subject to this chapter, an offense against this chapter, punishable by confinement for five years or more and for which the person cannot be tried in the courts of the United States or of a State, a Territory, or District of Columbia, may be relieved from amenability to trial by court-martial by reason of the termination of that status.
>
> (b) Each person discharged from the armed forces who is later charged with having fraudulently obtained his discharge is, subject to section 843 of this title (article 43), subject to trial by court-martial on that charge and is after apprehension subject to trial by court-martial for all offense under this chapter committed before the fraudulent discharge
>
> (c) No person who has deserted from the armed forces may be relieved form amenability to the jurisdiction of this chapter by virtue of separation from any later period of service.
>
> (d) A member of a reserve component who is subject to this chapter is not, by virtue of the termination of a period of active duty or inactive- duty training, relieved from amenability to the jurisdiction of this chapter for an offense against this chapter committed during such period of active duty or inactive-duty training.

UCMJ arts. 2, 3 (2002). This vast expansion of personal jurisdiction was well documented at the time. *See, e.g.*, JOSEPH W. BISHOP JR., JUSTICE UNDER FIRE 60 (1974) ("The Uniform Code of 1950 marked the zenith of military jurisdiction over civilians."); GENEROUS, *supra* note 306, at 176 ("The new UCMJ provided for court-martial jurisdiction over a varieties of people who in the past had been in such small numbers as to be insignificant."). Some of these provisions of the UCMJ extending jurisdiction were limited by the court, *see* i*nfra* Part IV.D.2.

[410] UCMJ arts. 118, 120 (2002). The expansion of subject matter jurisdiction received similar contemporaneous criticism, *see, e.g.*, BISHOP, *supra* note 409, at 60 ("By 1950 . . . all soldiers and millions of civilians were

Congress eliminated the turnover provision, which had required commanding officers to honor requests to deliver Soldiers accused of common-law crimes to civil authorities.[411] For the first time, military courts-martial were given subject-matter jurisdiction over all common-law felonies without being required to relinquish authority to civilian courts. While Congress continues to modify rules and procedures from time to time, the UCMJ of 1950 remains the primary authority for military courts-martial.[412]

While the UCMJ significantly modified the Articles of War concerning who and what could be tried before military court-martial, Congress did not make any changes to the authority of military commissions. Rather, in Article 21 of the UCMJ, Congress merely adopted verbatim the language from Article 15 of the 1920 Articles of War, which provided for concurrent jurisdiction of military commissions in cases where statute or the law of war authorized their use.[413] Additionally, while Congress has recently passed laws granting federal courts jurisdiction over war crimes and other military employees, in each case it

---

triable by court-martial for just about any offense"). Subject matter jurisdiction was also restricted temporarily by the Supreme Court. *See infra* Part IV.D.2.

[411] *See* Wiener, *supra* note 25, at 12.

[412] *See, e.g.*, Military Justice Act of 1968, Pub. L. No. 90-632, 82 Stat. 1335, 1336 (1968) (creating military trial judges); The Military Justice Act of 1983, Pub. L. No. 98-209, 1259, 97 Stat. 1393, 1405-06 (1983) (granting the Supreme Court *certiorari* over decisions of the Court of Appeals of the Armed Forces).

[413] The specific language reads as follows:

> Art. 21. Jurisdiction of courts-martial not exclusive. The provisions of these articles conferring jurisdiction upon courts-martial shall not be construed as depriving military commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals of concurrent jurisdiction in respect of offenders or offenses that by the law of war may be lawfully triable by such commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals.

See Katyal & Tribe, *supra* note 10, at 1287-90 (suggesting that Article 21 of the UCMJ should not be construed identically to its predecessor, Article 15, and instead limited to times of declared war).

preserved the concurrent jurisdiction of military commissions under the law of war.[414] Throughout the last half-century, Congress has continued to provide statutory authority for the use of military commissions in accordance with "statute or the law of war," but has made no effort to define their jurisdiction expressly.

The United States also modified the jurisdiction of military tribunals by entering into an international agreement supporting the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Because the Constitution mandates that "all Treaties made . . . under Authority of the United States, shall be the Supreme Law of the Land,"[415] the Geneva Conventions became binding domestic law, and part of the law of war, after receiving President Truman's signature in 1949 and upon final Senate ratification on February 8, 1955.[416] The two Geneva treaties with the most significant restrictive impact on military tribunals were Geneva Convention III, Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, [417] and Geneva Convention IV, Relative to the Protection

---

[414] *See, e.g.*, Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act of 2000, 18 U.S.C. § 3261(c) (2000).

> Nothing in this chapter may be construed to deprive a court-martial, military commission, provost court, or other military tribunal of concurrent jurisdiction with respect to offenders or offenses that by statute or by the law of war may be tried by a court-martial, military commission, provost court, or other military tribunal.

See also War Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. § 2441 (2000) (granting federal district courts jurisdiction over war crimes where either the accused or the victim is a national of the United States). "The enactment of [The War Crimes Act] is not intended to affect in any way the jurisdiction of any court-martial, military commission, or other military tribunal under the law of war or the law of nations". H.R. REP. No. 104-698 at 12, 1996 USCCAN 2166, 2177. *Id.* Both of these federal laws filled jurisdictional gaps that existed because Congress had previously not extended many federal criminal laws or federal court jurisdiction to cover crimes committed overseas.

[415] U.S. CONST. art. VI, § 2.

[416] *See* International Committee of the Red Cross, Treaty Database, *at* http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/db8c9c8d3ba9d16f41256739003e6371/d6b53f5b5d14f35ac1256402003f9920; *see also* Senate Comm. of Foreign Relations, Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims, S. EXEC. REP. No. 84-89 (1955), *reprinted in* 84 CONG. REC. 9958, 9972 (1955).

[417] Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, *opened for signature* Aug 12, 1949, 6 U.S.T. 3316, 75 U.N.T.S. 135 [hereinafter Geneva Convention III].

of Civilian Persons in Time of War.[418] While neither of these treaties flatly prohibited military tribunals, each treaty placed limitations on how and when such military courts could be used.

Building upon previous international agreements,[419] Geneva Convention III set forth specific requirements for the trial of enemy prisoners of war (POWs). Specifically, Geneva Convention III limited the use of military tribunals against POWs to "the same courts according the same procedure as in the case of members of the armed forces of the Detaining Power."[420] Because the United States does not use military commissions to try its own military personnel, Geneva Convention III mandates that the United States can no longer use them to prosecute enemy POWs. This marked a significant change in U.S. policy from the trials of General Yamashita and other World War II prisoners of war before military commissions. Geneva Convention IV requires that during military occupation, local national courts be used as far as possible to punish all civilian crimes,[421] and requires that any military tribunals created to punish violations of military order sit in the occupied territory itself, and not in some other location.[422] Moreover, Geneva Convention IV limits military courts' ability to prosecute offenses committed before actual occupation. Instead, it requires that military courts only punish civilians for crimes committed before the military occupation if those offenses were "breaches of the laws and customs of war."[423] Taken together, Geneva Conventions III and IV place significant limitations on the use of military tribunals, limiting both the personal and subject matter jurisdiction of tribunals, and requiring the United States to afford enemy prisoners the same due process that it gives its own Soldiers.

---

[418] Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Civilian Persons in Time of War, *opened for signature* Aug. 12, 1949, 6 U.S.T. 3316, 75 U.N.T.S. 135 [hereinafter Geneva Convention IV].

[419] *See, e.g.*, JEAN DE PREUX ET AL, COMMENTARY, IV GENEVA CONVENTION: RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN PERSONS IN TIME OF WAR, 3-4 (Jean S. Pictet ed., 1958) [hereinafter DE PREUX].

[420] Geneva Convention III, *supra* note 417, art. 102.

[421] Geneva Convention IV, *supra* note 418, art. 64.

[422] *Id.* at art. 66.

[423] *Id.* at art. 70.

For many years, these changes had little or no practical effect on the United States because following the end of World War II military commissions were not used for the remainder of the twentieth century. Instead, under the UCMJ, only courts-martial were convened by the United States. However, because the UCMJ expanded both personal and subject matter jurisdiction of courts-martial, the use of military courts continued to be a live issue through the twentieth century. Without a doubt, the UCMJ substantially improved the fairness of military courts, but the military justice system continued to receive substantial criticism from both inside and outside the military.[424] This was especially true during the Vietnam War.[425] The most famous case of this era (and one that drew the most intensive criticism)[426] concerned the court-martial of Lieutenant William Calley for the massacre of 500 women, children and unarmed civilians at Mai Lai on March 16, 1968.[427] The court-martial convicted Lieutenant Calley of murder and sentenced him to life in prison. In the face of immense public dissatisfaction with the verdict, however, President Nixon released Calley from prison in 1974.

Beginning in August 2004, President Bush began using military commissions against Hamdan and other detainees at Guantanamo Bay.[428] The President maintains authority to convene these military commissions as Commander in Chief under the Constitution's Article

[424] *See, e.g.*, Kenneth J. Hodson, *The Manual for Courts-Martial*—1984, 57 MIL. L. REV. 1-5 (1972) (chronicling much of the criticism of military justice, in general, and the UCMJ in particular).

[425] *See, e.g.*, ROBERT SHERRILL, MILITARY JUSTICE IS TO JUSTICE AS MILITARY MUSIC IS TO MUSIC (1969).

[426] Major General Hodson, Judge Advocate General of the Army stated that the Calley trial "developed a number of critical scholars of the military justice system," and noted that he had received more that 12,000 letters about Lieutenant Calley's conviction. *See* Cox, *supra* note 40, at 16 (*quoting* KAN. CITY TIMES, May 19, 1975, at 5).

[427] For details on the incident, see generally SEYMOUR HERSH, MY LAI 4: A REPORT ON THE MASSACRE AND ITS AFTERMATH (1970). *See also* United States v. Calley, 22 M.J. 534 (U.S.C.M.A. 1973); Calley v. Callaway, 519 F.2d 184 (1975) *cert denied* 425 U.S. 911 (1976).

[428] *See supra* notes 3-5 and accompanying text.

II, and from the congressional authority granted him under Article 21 of the UCMJ.[429] The Government asserts that Hamdan, the first person tried by military tribunal, is guilty of conspiracy of war crimes by serving as Osama bin Laden's personal driver and bodyguard, and delivering weapons and ammunition to al Qaeda members from February 1996 through November 2001.[430] While the military captured Hamdan during combat operations in Afghanistan, many of these other detainees at Guantanamo Bay were not captured on the battlefield but instead taken from "friendly" nations outside a theatre of traditional international armed conflict.[431] In justifying the use of military commissions, the United States maintains that the accused are neither civilians, entitled to a trial in constitutional court, nor prisoners of war, entitled to the protections of a court-martial under Geneva Convention III. Instead, the government asserts that Hamdan, and the other detainees at Guantanamo Bay, are military-civilian hybrids known as "unlawful combatants" properly tried before a military commission without the protections of Geneva Convention III.[432]

2. Supreme Court Review of Military Tribunals 1951-2004

[429] Military Order of Nov. 13, 2001: Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism, 3 C.F.R. 918, 918 (2005).

[430] *See* Dep't of Defense, Military Commission List of Charges for Salim Ahmed Hamdan, *available at* http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jul2004/d20040714hcc.pdf.

[431] The military captured other Guantanamo Bay detainees in nations where the United States has not been involved in traditional international armed conflict such as Gambia, Zambia, Bosnia, and Thailand. *See In re Guantanamo* Detainee Cases, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1236, 6-7 (D.D.C. 2005).

[432] Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 344 F. Supp. 2d 152, 160 (D.D.C. 2004) ("The government does not dispute the proposition that prisoners of war may not be tried by military tribunal. Its position is that Hamdan is not entitled to the protections of the Third Geneva Convention.").

Although the UCMJ made military court-martial more sophisticated and protective of individual rights, in the years following its enactment, the Supreme Court has become more willing than ever before to limit the jurisdiction of military tribunals. The first such case the Supreme Court heard during this era, *Madsen v. Kinsella*,[433] concerned the use of a military commission prior to enactment of the UCMJ. Yvette Madsen was a U.S. citizen who lived with her husband in Germany because he was assigned there as an officer in the United States Air Force.[434] In October 1949, Madsen was charged by a United States Military Government Court with murdering her husband in violation of the German Criminal Code. She was found guilty by military commission and sentenced to 15 years in federal prison.[435] On a petition for *habeas corpus*, Madsen did not challenge the authority of the military to prosecute her by arguing that she must be prosecuted in either German or American court. Instead, she asserted that a military court-martial was the only military tribunal with jurisdiction to prosecute her, not the military commission used in her case. The Supreme Court disagreed, citing to both historical use of military commissions and Congress' approval under Article of War 15 (now Article 21 of the UCMJ) to allow their use for crimes that "by statute or by the law of war may be triable by such military commissions."[436] The Court concluded that because U.S. military occupation courts in Germany were consistent with the law of war, the President could establish military commissions in territory occupied by

[433] 343 U.S. 341 (1952).

[434] *Id.* at 343.

[435] *Id.* at 344-45.

[436] *Id*. at 354.

military forces "in the absence of attempts by Congress to limit the President's power."[437] Justice Black wrote the sole dissent in the *Madsen* case. He argued that "if American citizens in present-day Germany are to be tried by the American Government, they should be tried under laws passed by Congress and in courts created by Congress under its constitutional authority," rather than in any military court[438]

Following *Madsen*, Justice Black's dissenting position began to gain support, and the Supreme Court issued a serious of decisions significantly restricting the jurisdiction of military tribunals. For the first time, the Supreme Court struck down several congressionally created jurisdictional provisions of courts-martial by holding that they exceeded constitutional limits. First, in *Toth v. Quarles*,[439] the Court struck down Article 3a[440] of the recently-enacted UCMJ extending courts-martial jurisdiction over discharged service members who committed felonies during their time on active duty.[441] Toth was a former airman in the United States Air Force who completed his service and received an honorable discharge from the military. After his discharge, the military discovered that he committed a murder while stationed in Korea and still on active duty. The Air Force arrested Toth and pursuant to the UCMJ returned him to Korea, where a court-martial convicted him of murder. On petition for *certiorari*, Toth argued that after his discharge, he was a civilian and the

[437] *Id*. at 348, 356.

[438] *Id*. at 372 (Black, J., dissenting).

[439] 350 U.S. 11, 23 (1955).

[440] UCMJ art. 3(a) (2002).

[441] 350 U.S. 11 (1955).

Constitution prohibited his trial by court-martial.[442] The Supreme Court agreed. Now, writing for the Court, Justice Black pointed to Article III of the Constitution and held that Congress' power to make rules for the government of the military "does not empower Congress to deprive people of trials under Bill of Rights safeguards." Because the use of military jurisdiction calls for "the least possible power adequate to the end proposed,"[443] civilians like Toth are entitled to the benefits and safeguards of Article III courts provided in the Constitution.[444]

When the Supreme Court revisited the issue of military jurisdiction the next year, it indicated a lack of interest in further restricting the jurisdiction of military courts. At the end of Supreme Court's term, the Court heard two cases, *Kinsella v. Krueger*,[445] and *Reid v. Covert*,[446] which involved two military spouses convicted at court-martial for killing their husbands while stationed overseas. Both women challenged the constitutionality of their trials by courts-martial rather than constitutional courts.[447] The Court initially rejected their claims by pointing to the historical power of Congress to establish legislative courts. Historically, Congress possessed the constitutional authority to establish territorial courts outside the United States that do not necessarily meet Article III constitutional restrictions.

---

[442] *Id*. at 13.

[443] *Id*. at 23.

[444] *Id*.

[445] 351 U.S. 470 (1956).

[446] 351 U.S. 487 (1956).

[447] Dorothy Krueger Smith was court-martialed in Tokyo, Japan and sentenced to life imprisonment for killing her husband, a Colonel in the U.S. Army. *Krueger*, 351 U.S. at 471-72. Clarice Covert was court-martialed in England and sentenced to life in prison for killing her husband, an Air Force sergeant. *Reid*, 351 U.S. at 491.

By this analogy, the Court upheld Congress' authority to subject military dependants serving in foreign countries to courts-martial under the UCMJ.[448] Three justices dissented from this opinion stating:

> [The issue is] complex, the remedy drastic, and the consequences far-reaching upon the lives of civilians. The military is given new powers not hitherto thought consistent with our scheme of government. For these reasons, we need more time than is available in these closing days of the Term in which to write our dissenting views. We will file our dissents during the next Term of Court.[449]

By the time the 1957 Court Term arrived, two Supreme Court justices had retired and the Court took the unusual step of granting a petition for a rehearing on these two cases. Upon rehearing, the Court reversed course and dismissed the murder convictions of both military wives. In *Reid v. Covert*,[450] Justice Black wrote the lead opinion. He held that the text of the Constitution clearly prohibited the trial of military spouses by military tribunal, and that every extension of military jurisdiction necessarily encroached on the power of civil courts and the protections of the Bill of Rights such as trial by jury. He asserted that it was "clear that the Founders had no intention to permit the trial of civilians in military courts, where they would be denied jury trials and other constitutional protections, merely by giving Congress the power to make rules which were 'necessary and proper' for the regulation of

---

[448] *Krueger*, 351 U.S. at 475-76; *Reid*, 351 U.S. at 488.

[449] *Krueger*, 351 U.S. at 485-86 (Warren, Black, and Douglas, JJ., dissenting). The dissent also applied to *Reid*. *Id.* Justice Frankfurter filed a reservation to the case noting that the pressure of the end of the term precluded the Court from properly analyzing the issues. *Id.* at 481-83.

[450] 354 U.S. 1 (1957).

the 'land and naval Forces.'"[451] He went on: "The Constitution does not say that Congress can regulate 'the land and naval Forces and all other persons whose regulation might have some relationship to maintenance of the land and naval Forces.'"[452] Thus, the text and history of the Constitution make clear that the Constitution does not subject civilians who have a relationship with the armed forces to trial by military tribunal.[453]

The military initially sought to limit the impact of the Court's decisions to capital crimes because both Covert and Krueger were court-martialed for the capital offense of murder. In 1960, however, the Supreme Court clarified that the Constitution prohibited military courts from prosecuting family members for non-capital offenses as well. Thus, in *Kinsella v. United States ex. rel. Singleton*,[454] the Court held the military could not court-martial Joanna Dial for involuntary manslaughter even though she was stationed overseas with her Soldier-husband. Following the rationale articulated in *Toth* and *Covert*, the Court held that "trial by court-martial is constitutionally permissible *only* for persons who can, on a fair appraisal, be regarded as falling within the authority given to Congress under Article I to regulate the 'land and naval Forces.'"[455] The Court established a bright-line rule of personal jurisdiction, stating that "the test for jurisdiction . . . is one of *status*, namely, whether the

---

[451] *Id*. at 30.

[452] *Id*.

[453] Justice Black wrote "if the language . . . is given its natural meaning, the power granted does not extend to civilians—even though they may be dependents living with servicemen on a military base. The term 'land and naval Forces' refers to persons who are members of the armed services and not to their civilian wives, children and other dependents." *Id*. at 19-20.

[454] 361 U.S. 234 (1959).

[455] *Id.* at 240.

accused in the court-martial proceeding is a person who can be regarded as falling within the term 'land and naval Forces.'"[456] In reaching this decision, the Court rejected the government's suggestion that the Court adopt a balancing test that examined the significance of the military offense and the nature of the person's connection to the service. In rebuking that view, the Court held that whoever is part of 'the land and naval forces' is subject to court-martial for any offense; those who are not part of the land and naval forces cannot be tried by military court-martial whatsoever.[457] The Supreme Court published two companion cases the same day as *Singleton*, which struck down Article 2 (11) of the UCMJ subjecting civilian employees of the military to courts-martial for capital or non-capital offenses while serving with the Army overseas.[458]

---

[456] *Id*. at 241.

[457] The Court held:

> The power to 'make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces' bears no limitation as to offenses. The power there granted includes not only the creation of offenses but the fixing of the punishment thereof. If civilian dependents are included in the term 'land and naval Forces' at all, they are subject to the full power granted the Congress therein to create capital as well as noncapital offenses. This Court cannot diminish and expand that power, either on a case-by-case basis or on a balancing of the power there granted Congress against the safeguards of Article III and the Fifth and Sixth Amendments.

Id. at 246.

[458] McElroy v. United States *ex rel.* Guagliardo, 361 U.S. 281, 286 (1960) (holding courts-martial jurisdiction over a civilian employee of the armed forces serving outside the United States in time of peace for non-capital case is unconstitutional); Grisham v. Hagen, 361 U.S. 278, 280 (1960) (courts-martial over civilian employee of the Army serving outside the U.S. during peacetime employee for a capital offense is unconstitutional). The issue of whether or not a civilian could be court-martialed while serving overseas has never been addressed by the Supreme Court and is still an open issue. During the Vietnam War, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces avoided the issue by declaring that in order for a civilian employee to be court-martialed there must be a declaration of war by Congress. *See* United States v. Averette, 19 U.S.C.M.A. (C.M.A. 1970). Congress addressed this issue recently in the Military Extraterritorial Justice Act of 2000 to expand federal jurisdiction over civilians accompanying the armed forces. However, it kept open the option of concurrent military jurisdiction. *See* Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act of 2000, 18 U.S.C. § 3261(c) ("Nothing in this chapter may be construed to deprive a court-martial, military commission, provost court, or other military

The Court next addressed the issue of military jurisdiction in *Lee v. Madigan*.[459] John Lee was a prisoner, dishonorably discharged from the Army for assault and robbery. The military court-martialed Lee for conspiring to commit murder while serving time in jail after his military discharge. Lee argued that the Court's decisions in *Toth* and its progeny effectively overruled *Kahn* because the Constitution prohibits court-martial jurisdiction over discharged Soldiers, including discharged military prisoners.[460] The Court chose not to reach the constitutional question whether court-martial jurisdiction extends to discharged military prisoners. The Court ruled instead, because the 1920 Articles of War in affect at the time of Lee's offense prohibited court-martial for murder in time of peace, Lee's court-martial lacked subject matter jurisdiction over the offense.[461] The Court referenced America's historic desire to limit the reach of military tribunals. Even if Congress wanted to continue the use of military courts "long after hostilities ceased, we cannot readily assume that the earlier Congress used 'in time of peace' in Article 92 to deny Soldiers or civilians the benefit of jury trials for capital offenses four years after all hostilities had ceased."[462] As such, the Court concluded that while the U.S was still technically at war with Germany and Japan in

---

tribunal of concurrent jurisdiction with respect to offenders or offenses that by statute or by the law of war may be tried by a court-martial, military commission, provost court, or other military tribunal.)".

[459] 358 U.S. 228 (1959).

[460] Lee v. Madigan, 248 F.2d 783, 784 (9th Cir. 1957).

[461] *Lee*, 358 U.S. at 235-36.

[462] *Id*. at 236.

1949, it was a "time of peace" for purposes of the court-martial, and thus lacked subject matter jurisdiction.[463]

Dicta in *Singleton* indicated that if a court-martial had jurisdiction over a particular person, then there was no constitutional limitation on its subject matter jurisdiction.[464] But, the Court quickly abandoned that view (at least temporarily). In 1969, the Supreme Court again curtailed Congress' broad grant of courts-martial jurisdiction under the UCMJ, this time holding that Congress lacked the constitutional power to grant courts-martial subject-matter jurisdiction over crimes that had no military "service connection."[465] In *O'Callahan v. Parker*,[466] the Supreme Court held that despite Congress' authority under Article I, Clause 14 of the Constitution to "make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval forces,"[467] Congress could not confer courts-martial jurisdiction without violating Article III and the Fifth and Sixth Amendments unless the crime itself was service-related.[468] The *O'Callahan* Court did not look merely at the status of the accused as a member of the armed forces to decide the question, stating that "[status] is the beginning of the inquiry, not

[463] This is a significant departure from previous precedent. In *Kahn*, the previous Supreme Court case dealing with a military prisoner, the Court unanimously held that the term "in time of peace" in Article 92 "signifies peace in the complete sense, officially declared." *Id*. at 237 (Harlan, J, dissenting). *See also supra* note 346 and accompanying text. Accordingly, this case is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with *Kahn*.

[464] *See, e.g.*, *Singleton*, 361 U.S. at 234 ("the power to make Rules for the Government of the land and naval Forces' bears no limitation as to offenses"); *see also supra* notes 454-457 and accompanying text.

[465] O'Callahan v. Parker, 395 U.S. 258, 272 (1969).

[466] 395 U.S. 258 (1969).

[467] U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 14.

[468] *O'Callahan*, 395 U.S. at 272-74.

its end."[469] It canvassed historical practice and noted that "both in England prior to the American Revolution and in our own national history military trial of Soldiers committing civilian offenses had been viewed with suspicion."[470] Indeed, throughout much of American history, courts-martial have lacked the authority to try Soldiers for civilian offenses.[471] Basing its holding on this historical analysis, the Court held that: for a "crime to be under military jurisdiction [it] must be service connected, lest 'cases arising in the land or naval forces' . . . be expanded to deprive every member of the armed services of the benefits of an indictment by a grand jury and a trial by a jury of his peers."[472]

Following the *O'Callahan* decision, the Supreme Court attempted to clarify and define when an offense is "service-connected" and amenable to prosecution by military courts-martial. In *Relford v. Commandant*,[473] the Court enumerated 12 factors to use in deciding whether a particular Soldier's crime is service-connected.[474] But, *O'Callahan's* limitation on subject matter jurisdiction did not last long. In 1987, the Supreme Court explicitly overruled *O'Callahan* in *Solorio v. United States*,[475] stating that "on re-

---

[469] *Id*. at 267.

[470] *Id*. at 268.

[471] *See id*.

[472] *Id*. at 273.

[473] 401 U.S. 355 (1971).

[474] *Id*. at 365. *See also* Gosa v. Mayden, 413 U.S. 665, 674 (1973) (noting that *O'Callahan* "restrict[ed] the exercise of jurisdiction by military tribunals to those crimes with a service connection as an appropriate and beneficial limitation 'to the narrowest jurisdiction deemed absolutely essential to maintaining discipline among troops in active service.'").

[475] 483 U.S. 435 (1987).

examination of *O'Callahan*, we have decided that the service connection test announced in that decision should be abandoned."[476]

In overruling the *O'Callahan* decision, the *Solorio* majority also based its decision on historical practice, asserting that "the *O'Callahan* Court's representation of . . . history . . . is less than accurate."[477] In refuting *O'Callahan's* reading of history, the *Solorio* majority quoted from sections of both the British Articles of War of 1774, and the American Articles of War, which the Court viewed as punishing Soldiers for civilian offenses.[478] The Court

---

[476] *Id*. at 440-41.

[477] *Id*. at 442.

[478] One example of the Court's questioning *O'Callahan's* reading of history is Justice Rehnquist, writing for the majority, citing to Section XIV of Article XVI of the British Articles of War of 1774. It stated that any soldier who "shall maliciously destroy any Property whatsoever belonging to any of Our Subjects, unless by order of the then Commander in Chief of Our forces, to annoy any Rebels or other Enemies in Arms against Us, he or they shall be found guilty of offending herein shall (besides such Penalties as they are liable to by law) be punished according to the Nature and Degree of the Offence, by the Judgment of a Regimental or general Court Martial." *Solorio*, 483 U.S. at 443, *quoting* British Articles of War of 1774 art. XVI, Sec. XIV, *reprinted in* G. DAVIS, MILITARY LAW OF THE UNITED STATES 581, 593 (3d rev. ed. 1915). This position was disputed by the dissenting justices. For example Justice Marshall pointed out the Court's omission of the beginning of the quotation, which read "All Officers and Soldiers are to behave themselves orderly in Quarters, and on their March." British Articles of War of 1774, art. XVI, Sec. XIV, *reprinted in* G. DAVIS, MILITARY LAW OF THE UNITED STATES 581, 593 (3d rev. ed. 1915). Marshall argued that this omission shows that this section of the British Articles of War was designed to prevent dereliction of military duty, as opposed to a purely civilian offense. *Solorio*, 483 U.S. at 459-60 (Marshall, J. dissenting). The entire quote from the British Articles actually reads as follows:

> All Officers and Soldiers are to behave themselves orderly in Quarters, and on their March; and whoever shall commit any Waste or Spoil either in Walks or Trees, Parks, Warrens, Fish Ponds, Houses or Gardens, Corn Fields, Enclosures or Meadows, or shall maliciously destroy any Property whatsoever belonging to any of Our Subjects, unless by order of the then Commander in Chief of Our forces, to annoy any Rebels or other Enemies in Arms against Us, he or they shall be found guilty of offending herein shall (besides such Penalties as they are liable to by law) be punished according to the Nature and Degree of the Offence, by the Judgment of a Regimental or general Court Martial.

Id. Based on this language it seems the dissent may have a stronger reading of history in this particular instance. *See* Michael P. Connors, *The Demise of the Service-Connection Test:* Solorio v. United States, 37 CATH. U. L. REV. 1145, 1166-67 (1988). In a vehement dissent, Justice Marshall argued that the *Solorio* majority had incorrectly decided the case "by assuming that the limitation on court-martial jurisdiction enunciated in *O'Callahan* was based on the power of Congress, contained in Art I, §. 8, cl. 14." *Id.* at 451. He

went on to overrule the *O'Callahan* service-connection requirement by relying on a literal reading of Congress' power under Article I, Clause 14 of the Constitution: "The history of court-martial jurisdiction in England and in this country during the 17th and 18th centuries is far too ambiguous to justify the restriction on the plain language of Clause 14 *O'Callahan* imported into it."[479] Thus, *Solorio* held that Congress' plenary power under Article I to "make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval forces"[480] allows courts-martial jurisdiction as long as the accused "was a member of the Armed Services at the time of the offense charged."[481] The *Solorio* opinion is significant because it was the first—and thus far only—explicit overruling of a previous military jurisdiction decision. It appeared to resolve the issue of military jurisdiction by making the sole constitutional test that of status of the accused as a member of "the land and naval Forces."

While *Solorio's* purportedly authoritative interpretation of history might have ended debate on whether the Constitution limits the subject-matter jurisdiction of courts-martial, the

---

criticized the majority because rather than "acknowledging the [constitutional] limits on the crimes triable in a court-martial, the [*Solorio*] court simply ignores them." Justice Marshall maintained that the *O'Callahan* decision was firmly based not on Clause 14, but on the Bill of Rights. To support this assertion he cited *O'Callahan*'s holding: "[for a] crime to be under military jurisdiction [it] must be service connected, lest 'cases arising in the land or naval forces' . . . be expanded to deprive every member of the armed services of the benefits of an indictment by a grand jury and a trial by a jury of his peers." *Id* at 452. While *O'Callahan*'s rationale may have been ambiguous, the *O'Callahan* Court did hold that Congress could not allow a court-martial to violate a soldier's Fifth and Sixth Amendment protections unless the case itself—not just the person accused—arose in the armed forces. Thus, Justice Marshall argued that *O'Callahan* stood for the principle that Congress' "express grant of general power [under Article I must] be exercised in harmony with the express guarantees of the Bill of Rights." *Id.* He went on to harshly criticize the *Solorio* majority and argued that the Court's overruling of *O'Callahan* "reflects contempt, both for the members of our Armed Forces and for the constitutional safeguards intended to protect us all." *Id* at 467 (Marshall, J, dissenting).

[479] *Solorio*, 483 U.S. at 446.

[480] U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 14.

[481] *Solorio*, 483 U.S. at 451.

issue resurfaced less than ten years later in *U.S. v. Loving.*[482] In *Loving*, four justices wrote a concurring opinion stating:

> The question whether a 'service connection' requirement should obtain in capital cases is an open one both because *Solorio* was not a capital case, and because *Solorio's* review of the historical materials would seem to undermine any contention that a military tribunal's power to try capital offenses must be as broad as its power to try non-capital ones.[483]

The Supreme Court has not again addressed the issue, but this concurring opinion re-ignited the debate about whether the Constitution prohibits courts-martial jurisdiction over capital cases without a military nexus.[484]

---

[482] 517 U.S. 748 (1996).

[483] *Loving*, 517 U.S. at 774 (Stevens, J., concurring). In *Loving*, the issue before the Court was limited to whether the President had authority to promulgate aggravating factors for capital offenses to support the death penalty. While the Court was unanimous in holding that the President had such power, Justice Stevens wrote a concurring opinion, joined by Justices Breyer, Ginsburg, and Souter supporting the decision only because the case clearly involved a military offense.

[484] This opinion generated a good deal of legal scholarship and directly impacted the strategy of subsequent military defendants in lower courts, *See, e.g.*, O'Connor, *supra* note 108; Nicole, E. Jaeger, *Supreme Court Review: Maybe Soldiers Have Rights After All*: Loving v. Virginia, 87 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 895 (1997); Christine Daniels, *Capital Punishment and the Courts-Martial: Questions Surface Following* Loving v. United States, 55 WASH & LEE L. REV. 577 (1998); Mark R. Owens, Loving v. United States: *Private Dwight Loving Fights a Battle for His Life Using Separation of Powers as His Defense*, 7 WIDENER J. PUB. L. 287 (1998); Meredith L. Robinson, *Volunteers for the Death Penalty? The Application of* Solorio v. United States *to Military Capital Litigation*, 6 Geo. MASON L. REV. 1049 (1998). *See also* United States v. Gray, 51 M.J. 1, 11 (1999) (describing the accused's argument that the court-martial lacked jurisdiction because the prosecution failed to prove that his murder was service-connected); Martin Sitler, *The Court-Martial Cornerstone: Recent Developments in Jurisdiction*, ARMY LAW., Sept. 2000, at 4 ("There is undoubtedly a trend to recognize a service connection requirement in military capital cases. Practitioners should heed this message.").

In 2004, in *Rasul v. Bush*,[485] the Supreme Court significantly altered the ability of constitutional courts to review the jurisdiction of military tribunals. The case involved a petition from two Australian and twelve Kuwaiti citizens who were captured by American forces in Afghanistan during hostilities between the United States and the Taliban. The individuals were being held (along with over 600 other foreign nationals) by the U. S. military at a Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.[486] The district court and the court of appeals rejected petitioners' claims for *habeas corpus* because the courts believed that under *Eisentrager,* aliens detained outside the United States could not seek a writ of *habeas corpus*. The Supreme Court granted *certiorari* and reversed, holding that federal courts could entertain petitions for *habeas corpus* from prisoners detained in Guantanamo Bay.[487] Instead of relying on *Eisentrager,* the Court distinguished it from *Rasul*:

> Petitioners in these cases differ from the Eisentrager detainees in important respects: They are not nationals of countries at war with the United States, and they deny that they have engaged in or plotted acts of aggression against the United States; they have never been afforded access to any tribunal, much less charged with and convicted of wrongdoing; and for more than two years they

[485] 124 S. Ct. 2686 (2004). The Supreme Court released two other cases that same day dealing with the military's detention of "unlawful combatants." *See* Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, 124 S. Ct. 2633 (U.S. 2004) (holding that a "citizen-detainee is entitled to challenge his classification as an enemy combatant."); Rumsfeld v. Padilla, 124 S. Ct. 2711 (U.S. 2004) (limiting *habeas corpus* jurisdiction to "the district in which the detainee is confined.").

[486] *Rasul*, 124 S. Ct. at 2690.

[487] *Id.* at 2691-92. Technically, the Court did not rule on purely constitutional grounds. Rather, (as in *Duncan*) the Court imputed a broad statutory intent to Congress to prevent the Court from the need to confront directly the constitutional question. The Court held that in enacting 10 U.S.C. § 2441, Congress intended to extend *habeas* to foreign nationals. *Id.* at 2691-92.

> have been imprisoned in territory over which the United States exercises exclusive jurisdiction and control."[488]

The Court relied on *Milligan*, *Quirin*, and *Yamashita* to support its holding that detainees are entitled to *habeas* review if they are being held in territory exclusively controlled by the United States.[489] The Court's decision in *Rasul* provided the basis for Hamdan to challenge his trial by military commission in U.S. district court.[490]

In sum, during the modern era, the Court directly confronted the constitutional limits of military jurisdiction in several instances. The Court held that the Constitution limited the jurisdiction of military tribunals in a number of cases even when Congress had explicitly authorized an extension of military jurisdiction. As such, the Court plainly renounced earlier case law indicating Congress' had unlimited authority to regulate the "land and naval forces." Moreover, during this era, the Court began using a consistent methodology to determine the constitutional boundaries of military courts-martial. In case after case, the Supreme Court relied on the text of the Constitution and historical precedent in answering these questions. This methodology ultimately resulted in the conclusion that the sole constitutional restraint

---

[488] *Id*. at 2693.

[489] *Id*. at 2693, 2700. In his dissent, Justice Scalia argued that *Eisentrager* clearly controlled this case:

> The Court today holds that the habeas statute extends to aliens detained by the United States military overseas, outside the sovereign borders of the United States and beyond the territorial jurisdictions of all its courts. This is not only a novel holding; it contradicts a half-century-old precedent on which the military undoubtedly relied, *Johnson v. Eisentrager*. . . . This is an irresponsible overturning of settled law in a matter of extreme importance to our forces currently in the field. I would leave it to Congress to change and dissent from the Court's unprecedented holding.

Id. at 27-31 (Scalia, J., dissenting) (citations omitted).

[490] Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 344 F. Supp. 2d 152, 156 (D.D.C. 2004).

on court-martial jurisdiction is status: whether a person is "in the land and naval forces." If the person is part of the armed forces, per *Solorio*, he is constitutionally subject to court-martial for any offense. However, the Court's focus during this era has been solely on courts-martial under Congress' power to regulate the land and naval forces. Thus, these decisions provide little guidance for analyzing other military jurisdiction cases, such as Hamdan's trial by military commission.

V. The Supreme Court's Method of Analyzing Military Jurisdiction

A. Originalism-The Court's Sole Inquiry

One striking aspect of the Supreme Court's decisions limiting the constitutionality of military jurisdiction is the prominent use of historical analysis and textual interpretation of the Constitution. This method of constitutional interpretation is often termed originalism.[491] John Hart Ely maintained that the basic premise underlying originalism is the "insistence that the work of the political branches is to be invalidated only in accordance with an inference

[491] Originalism has existed throughout history and has gone by many different names throughout history including self-restraint, interpretivism, and strict constructionism. This article employs the modern term, originalism. Some of the many works studying this method s of constitutional interpretation include: JOHN HART ELY, DEMOCRACY AND DISTRUST: A THEORY OF JUDICIAL REVIEW 1 (1980) (describing the practice as "judges confining themselves to enforcing norms that are stated or clearly implicit in the written Constitution."); Lino A. Graglia, "*Interpreting" the Constitution: Posner on Bork*, 44 STAN. L. REV. 1019, 1019-22 (1992) ("Originalism is a virtual axiom of our legal-political system, necessary to distinguish the judicial from the legislative function."); Donald E. Lively, *Competing for the Consent of the Governed*, 42 HASTING L.J. 1527, 1531-45 (1991) (describing literalism and original intent as well as other theories of judicial review); Maurice H. Merrill, *Constitutional Interpretation: The Obligation to Respect the Text*, 25 OKLA. L. REV. 530 (1972) (advocating a literal interpretation of the Constitution's text). Perhaps the best and most articulate defense of originalism is by Judge Robert Bork, a former Supreme Court nominee. *See, e.g.*, ROBERT BORK, THE TEMPTING OF AMERICA: THE POLITICAL SEDUCTION OF THE LAW 81-3 (1990); Robert Bork, *Neutral Principles and Some First Amendment Problems*, 47 IND. L. REV. 1 (1971).

whose underlying premise, is fairly discoverable in the Constitution."[492] Originalists rely on the Constitution's text as well as historical analysis to identify the original intention of the Founders.[493]

The Supreme Court's use of originalism prevails throughout its military jurisdiction cases, especially the most recent cases limiting the jurisdiction of military courts-martial.[494] One of the earliest examples of the Court's reliance on originalism is *Milligan*, which marked the first time the Court declared military tribunals unconstitutional. The *Milligan* court looked to the text of Article III and America's history of ensuring trials take place in civil courts.[495] Likewise in *Duncan* the Court relied heavily on the Founders' belief that civil "courts and their procedural safeguards are indispensable to our system of government."[496] Again, the *Quirin* Court relied on originalism by looking to Congress' plenary Article I power to punish offenses against the law of nations, and the historic use of military commissions against spies, in allowing a military trial for violations of the law of war.[497] The Court continued to apply this methodology in *Reid* and the other personal jurisdiction

[492] ELY, DEMOCRACY AND DISTRUST, *supra* note 491, at 2.

[493] *See* Lively, *supra* note 491, at 1531.

[494] For a thorough discussion of these cases, see *supra* Part IV.B2, IV.C.2, and IV.D.2.

[495] *Ex parte* Milligan, 71 U.S. 2, 119 (1886) (the answer is "found in that clause of the original Constitution which says 'That the trial of all crimes, except in case of impeachment, shall be by jury;' and in the fourth, fifth, and sixth articles of the amendments."). *See supra* notes 245-253 and accompanying text.

[496] Duncan v. Kahanamoku, 327 U.S. 304, 322 (1946). *See supra* notes 371-380 and accompanying text.

[497] *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1, 41-44 (1942). *See supra* notes 347-362 and accompanying text.

cases, relying on the text of Article I to prohibit Congress from subjecting civilians to military courts.[498]

Without doubt, the Court's repeated use of originalism stems from the fact that Justice Black—who led the effort to limit military jurisdiction—was the Court's fiercest advocate of originalism.[499] For example, writing for the Court in *Toth*, Justice Black held that "given its natural meaning, the power granted Congress 'To make Rules' to regulate 'the land and naval Forces' would seem to restrict court-martial jurisdiction to persons who are actually members or part of the armed forces."[500] Following this same textual interpretation, in *Reid*,[501] the Court stated:

---

[498] Reid v. Covert, 354 U.S. 1, 30 (1957) ("It is clear that the Founders had no intention to permit the trial of civilians in military courts, where they would be denied jury trials and other constitutional protections, merely by giving Congress the power to make rules which were 'necessary and proper' for the regulation of the 'land and naval Forces'."). *See supra* notes 439-458 and accompanying text.

[499] Justice Black wrote many of the decisions limiting the jurisdiction of military tribunals including *Duncan*, *Toth*, and *Reid*. His advocacy of originalism is legendary. *See, e.g.*, Hugo Black, *The Bill of Rights*, 35 N.Y.U.L. REV 865 (1960); ELY, DEMOCRACY AND DISTRUST, *supra* note 491, at 2 ("Black is recognized, correctly, as the quintessential [originalist]."); Charles A. Reich, *Mr. Justice Black and the Living Constitution*, 76 HARV. L. REV. 673 (1962); Akhil Reed Amar, *Hugo Black and the Hall of Fame*, 53 ALA. L. REV. 1221 (2002). In fact, in numerous cases Black argued that originalism was the only proper method of interpreting the Constitution. *See also*, Lawrence Lessig, *Fidelity in Translation*, 71 TEX. L. REV. 1165, 1169 (1993). Lessig cites several cases in which Justice Black criticizes other methods of constitutional interpretation: Katz v. United States, 389 U.S. 347, 373 (1967) (Black, J., dissenting) ("I will not distort the words of the Amendment in order to 'keep the Constitution up to date' or to 'bring it into harmony with the times.'"); Harper v. Virginia State Bd. of Elections, 383 U.S. 663, 675-76 (1966) (Black, J., dissenting) ("[T]here is no constitutional support whatever for this Court to use the Due Process Clause as though it provided a blank check to alter the meaning of the Constitution as written so as to add to it substantive constitutional changes which a majority of the Court at any given time believes are needed to meet present-day problems."); Griswold v. Connecticut, 381 U.S. 479, 522 (1964) (Black, J., dissenting) (rejecting the philosophy that the Court has a duty to "keep the Constitution in tune with the times.").

[500] Toth v. Quarles, 350 U.S. 11, 15 (1955).

[501] 354 U.S.1, 30 (1957).

> The Constitution does not say that Congress can regulate 'the land and naval Forces and all other persons whose regulation might have some relationship to maintenance of the land and naval Forces.' There is no indication that the Founders contemplated setting up a rival system of military courts to compete with civilian courts for jurisdiction over civilians who might have some contact or relationship with the armed forces.[502]

This textualist approach led the Court to adopt a strict status test which limited Congress' Article I power to govern the 'land and naval forces' to courts-martial jurisdiction over actual members of the armed forces.

B. Originalism Fails to Properly Define Military Jurisdiction

1. History Cannot Resolve Modern Military Jurisdiction Questions

Unfortunately, the Court's use of history has not been effective in determining the proper constitutional restraints on military jurisdiction. This historical approach is ineffective at providing guidance on contemporary issues of military jurisdiction never confronted by the Founders. This is most vividly demonstrated by the Supreme Court's decision in *Solorio*, where the Court ruled that a person's military status as a member of the land and naval forces is the only relevant factor to determine whether a person can be subject to military jurisdiction. In reaching that decision, the Supreme Court overruled another military jurisdiction case for the first and only time in Supreme Court history. It did so by

[502] *Id*. at 30.

stating that *O'Callahan*, decided just eighteen years earlier, seriously misread history, demonstrating the sometimes-tenuous grounding of historical analysis.[503]

It is hard to overstate the difficulty of using history when interpreting contemporary issues of military jurisdiction. First, the Founders held differing opinions concerning the role of the military in society, as noted by Frederick Weiner: "to speak mildly, there existed in the late 1780s a considerable diversity of opinion regarding military policy."[504] The Founders also severely limited both who and what could be subject to military jurisdiction, generally excluding any offense that could be tried in civil court.[505] Historical practice provides little help with modern cases because few, if any, military tribunals of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries prosecuted peacetime common-law crimes.[506] Modern jurisdiction subjects many more people and offenses to military courts than the Founders could have ever envisioned.[507]

---

[503] *Solorio*, 483 U.S. at 442.

[504] Wiener, *supra* note 25, at 5.

[505] *Id*. at 5. *See* O'Connor, *supra* note 108, at 213-14 (the Constitutional Convention "offers little evidence as to the substantive meaning of Clause 14 . . . The Federalist papers . . . give us . . . nearly the only [ ] evidence of the extent of the power the Framers intended to give Congress."); *see also* THE FEDERALIST 23, at 145 (Alexander Hamilton) (powers for the common defense "ought to exist without limitation, because it is nearly impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national exigencies, or the correspondent extent and variety of the means which may be necessary to satisfy them.").

[506] Most historical references to courts-martial jurisdiction argued against allowing military jurisdiction during peacetime. For example, Blackstone stated: "the necessity of order and discipline in an army is the only thing which can give it countenance; and therefore it ought not be permitted in time of peace." 1 WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, COMMENTARIES (1769). The *Solorio* Court addressed this issue and concluded that although they did "not doubt that Blackstone's views on military law were known to the Framers, we are not persuaded that their relevance is sufficiently compelling to overcome the unqualified language of Art 1 [to regulate the land and naval Forces]." *Solorio*, 483 U.S. at 446.

[507] Wiener, *supra* note 25, at 11 (noting that the significant differences between the Founders' vision of a small limited military and the modern military "must be emphasized lest we be led to import into a consideration of the common understanding of 1787-1791 the vastly different situation of today.").

The *Solorio* Court recognized the ambiguity of historical analysis, and resorted to textualism in this most recent military jurisdiction decision. Conceding the difficulty with historical analysis, the Court rested its holding on a textualist interpretation of Article I, declaring that the unqualified language of Article I gives Congress virtually unlimited power to regulate members of the armed forces:

> Such disapproval [of courts-martial jurisdiction] in England at the time of William and Mary hardly proves that the Framers of the Constitution, contrary to the plenary language on which they conferred the power to Congress, meant to freeze court-martial usage at a particular time in such a way that Congress might not change it. The unqualified language of Clause 14 suggests that whatever these concerns, they were met by vesting Congress . . . authority to make rules for the government of the military.[508]

2. Textualism Leads to Illogical Results Contrary to the Founders' Intentions

Textualism demands that the Court interpret the Constitution in an identical manner as the Founders would have. As Judge Bork stated, "What is the meaning of a rule that judges should not change? It is the meaning understood at the time of the law's enactment."[509] The issues of military jurisdiction today, however, are radically different from those issues envisioned by the Founders. By applying a literal interpretation of the text of the Constitution to today's vastly different circumstances, the Court arguably departs significantly from actual intentions of the Founders. Ironically, the Court's creation of a status test may sanction the use of military tribunals in the exact opposite manner that the

[508] *Solorio*, 483 U.S. at 447.

[509] BORK, *supra* note 491, at 144.

Founders intended. The Founders extended military jurisdiction primarily over military offenses that civil courts could not resolve, and civil courts continued to prosecute Soldiers accused of civilian crimes. Current doctrine—making a person's military status the sole constitutional requirement—allows military jurisdiction over Soldiers for purely civilian offenses, and prohibits military jurisdiction over purely military offenses in cases where someone is no longer a member of the armed forces.[510]

More significantly, the Court's reliance on textualism has led to arbitrary and illogical results—subjecting some people to military jurisdiction even though their crimes have no effect on the military, while shielding others from trial by military tribunal even for crimes that directly harm the military mission. The fictional scenarios at the beginning of this Article highlight the weaknesses of the Court's current methodology. An exclusive focus on whether someone is a member of 'the land and naval forces' ignores the distinct impact different people and crimes have on the armed forces. A literal interpretation of Article I leads to the result that "whoever gets too close to the armed forces, whoever steps over the line separating those 'in' from those 'out' is subject to the totality of military jurisdiction; whoever remains on the other side of that line is wholly immune."[511] This reasoning led the Court to hold that certain military-civilian hybrids like military family members, civilian employees, and former Soldiers are constitutionally immune from military jurisdiction, even for offenses that are purely military in nature. Thus, the wife who destroyed the Air Force

[510] *See* Duke & Vogel, *supra* note 290, at 441 (1960) (making this argument).

[511] *See also* Joseph Bishop Jr., *Court Martial Jurisdiction Over Military-Civilian Hybrids: Retired Regulars, Reservists, and Discharged Prisoners*, 112 U. PA. L. REV. 317, 331 (1964).

bomber murdering several Airmen, the Marine employee who tortured and killed an Iraqi prisoner on duty, and the ex-Soldiers who broke onto a military post to steal weapons and form their own militia are all constitutionally protected from a trial in military court. Yet, the military can court-martial the retired fighter pilot for any offense, including tax evasion, because retirees are part of the land and naval forces and subject to military jurisdiction.[512]

3. Textualism Prevents Development of an Effective Methodology to Define the Jurisdiction of Military Commissions

The Court's over-reliance on textualism, including its focus on whether someone is 'a member of the land and naval forces,' distracts the Court from creating a workable methodology for all military jurisdiction cases and prevents it from properly identifying the boundary between military and constitutional courts. Accordingly, lower courts seeking to determine whether Hamdan's military commission trial is constitutional are left with out guidance.

[512] To date, the Supreme Court has never directly ruled on the constitutionality of court-martialing a retiree. In the only case to reach the Supreme Court on that matter, *Runkle v. United States*, 122 U.S. 543 (1887), the Court did not address the issue and invalidated the court-martial solely on the ground that the President had not approved the sentence. However, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces has upheld the court-martial of a retiree for sodomy. *See* Pearson v. Bloss, 28 M.J. 376 (C.M.A. 1989); United States v. Hooper, 9 C.M.R. 417 (C.M.A. 1958). Moreover, the U.S. Code and Department of Defense Regulations continue to authorize a retiree to be recalled to active duty at any time for court-martial. U.S. DEP'T OF DEFENSE DIR. 1352.1, MANAGEMENT AND MOBILIZATION OF REGULAR AND RESERVE RETIRED MILITARY MEMBERS para. 6.3.3 (3 Mar. 1990) (citing 10 U.S.C. § 302(a) (2000) and other provisions to recall a retiree for court-martial). Navy Regulations require approval of the Secretary of the Navy before a retiree's case is referred to trial but not before it is preferred. *See* U.S. DEP'T OF NAVY, JAGINST 5800.7C, MANUAL OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL ch. 1 sec. 0123(a)(1) (3 Oct. 1990). For a thorough discussion of whether retirees are subject to military jurisdiction, see Bishop, *supra* note 511, at 331-57. For a more recent analysis, see J. Mackey Ives, & Michael J. Davidson, *Court-Martial Jurisdiction Over Retirees Under Articles 2(4) And 2(6): Time To Lighten Up And Tighten Up?*, 175 MIL. L. REV. 1 (2003).

The constitutional boundaries of the current military commissions, for instance, are left completely undefined. The Court's textual interpretation of Congress' plenary power to regulate the armed forces provide no guidance on how to interpret Congress' other Article I powers such as their power to "declare War,"[513] and "to define and punish . . . Offences against the Law of Nations."[514] Nor do these cases provide any guidance about whether the President's power under Article II as the "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy"[515] authorizes him to create criminal military trials. As such, this approach provides no assistance in limiting martial law military government, or law of war military courts. Closely following the Court's textualist interpretation of these Article I and Article II powers would completely eviscerate the requirement that criminal trials take place in constitutional courts as mandated by Article III.[516] The Supreme Court's military jurisdiction decisions have interpreted Congress' power to regulate 'the land and naval forces' without regard to Article III. This textualist methodology and the Court's ultimate conclusion—that military status is the sole constitutional requirement for court-martial jurisdiction—prevents development of a methodology for determining the constitutional limits of other military courts.

It is understandable that there is so much uncertainty about the constitutionality of President Bush's current use of military commissions. The Supreme Court's courts-martial decisions, decided on Article I textualist grounds, provide no guidance on the limits of such

[513] U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 11.

[514] *Id.* cl. 10.

[515] *Id.* art. II, § 2, cl. 1.

[516] Article III directs that constitutional courts preside over "all cases . . . arising under this Constitution, [and] laws of the United States." *Id* art. III, § 2, cl. 2.

commissions. Apart from these cases, only a handful of Supreme Court precedents identify constitutional boundaries for military tribunals. Lower courts are left with the unenviable task of reconciling *Milligan, Duncan, Madsen, Yamashita,* and *Quirin* to entirely new facts never confronted by previous courts.[517] While remaining 'good' case law, none of these cases provide systematic guidance on how to determine the Constitutionality of military courts.[518] Further, they do not address contemporary issues liked whether military tribunals can prosecute aliens for international terrorism outside the context of declared war. In fact, *Quirin* specifically refused to create such a methodology, stating that the Court "had no occasion to define with meticulous care the ultimate boundaries of the jurisdiction of military tribunals to try persons according to the law of war. . . . [I]t is enough that petitioners here, upon conceded facts, were plainly within those boundaries."[519] The prior ambiguous findings leave current military commissions in un-chartered territory.

[517] *Milligan* and *Quirin* are the two key cases. *Duncan* generally supports *Milligan* in prohibiting military jurisdiction over civilians when civil courts are open. *Madsen* and *Yamashita* generally follow *Quirin* in upholding the constitutionality of military jurisdiction during declared war and occupation in locations where constitutional courts lack jurisdiction. None of these cases attempt to establish a workable methodology to determine the constitutionality of using military commissions in situations presented here. For a recent example of a lower court finding *Milligan* and *Quirin* the controlling two cases when confronted with a similar dilemma, *see* Padilla v. Hanft, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 2921 (D.S.C. 2005) (comparing *Milligan* and *Quirin* in determining whether the United States military can detain Padilla without charging him with a crime).

[518] *See supra* Part IV. Many have questioned the viability and precedential value of these holdings. *See, e.g.*, LAURENCE H. TRIBE, AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW 238 (2d ed. 1988) ("Both [*Milligan* and *Duncan*] limiting the power of the President to declare and enforce martial law were handed down after hostilities had subsided; one may doubt that the Court would have been so courageous had war still been underway."); ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 39 (*Milligan*'s "general observations on the limits of the war powers are no more valid today than they were in 1866."); CORWIN, *supra* note 351, at 118 (*Quirin* was "little more than a ceremonious detour to a predetermined goal intended chiefly for edification."); Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, 124 S. Ct. 2633, 2669 (2004) (*Quirin* "was not this Court's finest hour.") (Scalia, J., dissenting).

[519] *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1, 45-46 (1945).

In determining the constitutionality of military commissions, lower courts are left with two options: follow *Milligan* or follow *Quirin*.[520] In *Milligan*, the Court held that the Constitution flatly prohibits the President's use of military tribunals. Because of Milligan's civilian citizen status the military commission lacked jurisdiction and his trial had to take place in civilian court even though he was accused of unlawfully waging war. While Hamdan is not a U.S. citizen, he is but an alleged enemy of the United States, not an admitted member of a declared enemy army.[521] The government claims military jurisdiction over Hamdan, because like *Milligan*, the President determined that Hamdan was assisting an enemy force and thus violating the law of war. A court following *Milligan*, however, could rationally conclude that the Constitution prohibits the use of military tribunals for Hamdan because he was not part of an admitted enemy force during a time of declared war.

[520] Seeking to avoid this constitutional dilemma, the district court in *Hamdan* took a middle ground approach holding that Hamdan can be constitutionally tried by military tribunal only if he is prosecuted by a court-martial consistent with the requirements of Geneva Convention III. *See* Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 344 F. Supp. 2d 152, 178 (D.D.C. 2004). There is a compelling argument supporting the position that Geneva Convention III requires military commissions convened by the United States to use the same procedures as courts-martial. *See, e.g.*, Evan J. Wallach, *Afghanistan, Quirin, and Uchiyama*, ARMY LAW., Nov. 2003; Katyal & Tribe, *supra* note 10; MacDonnell, *supra* note 25; Barry, *supra* note 11. While this approach may be consistent with international law, and even with past U.S military practice, see for example, Glazier, *supra* note 11, it is not consistent with the Supreme Court's *constitutional* analysis. The Court has never held that the Constitution mandates any specific procedural requirements for military trials. *See supra* note 14 and accompanying text. In *Yamashita*, and *Madsen*, the Court specifically held that military commissions need *not* follow the same procedures as courts-martial. *See In re* Yamashita, 327 U.S. 1, 19 (1946); Madsen v. Kinsella, 343 U.S. 341, 346-48 (1952). Most importantly, this approach avoids the threshold question raised by this Article, that of when the Constitution allows trial by *any* military tribunal instead of a trial in constitutional court.

[521] Hamdan was captured during armed conflict in Afghanistan. The United States denied him status as an enemy prisoner of war. *See* Press Release, Dep't of Defense, President Determines Enemy Combatants Subject to his Military Order (July 3, 2003), *available at* http://www.defenselink.mil/ releases/2003/nr20030703-0173.html. Several of the other detainees being held at Guantanamo Bay were not even captured in places where the United States is involved in international armed conflict, but instead were taken from the territory of friendly nations. *See supra* note 431.

Alternatively, a court could follow *Quirin* and make a bright-line determination that the Constitution permits the President to use military commissions to prosecute Hamdan, and any non-citizens accused of assisting al Qaeda in the current armed conflict between the United States and al Qaeda. In *Quirin*, the Court upheld military trials by concluding that Congress sanctioned the use of military courts against "offenders and offenses that by . . . the law of war may be tried by military commissions."[522] It recognized the President's inherent authority as Commander in Chief, but did not determine "to what extent the President as Commander in Chief has constitutional power to create military commissions without the support of congressional legislation."[523] In *Quirin*, Congress had authorized military tribunals over the defendants because, consistent with the law of war, the accused were all admitted soldiers of an enemy government accused of committing unlawful war crimes during a declared war. This differs significantly from the current situation, where President Bush is asserting military jurisdiction outside of the historical, traditional boundaries of a declared war.[524] While Congress did not declare war against al Qaeda or any nation, it passed a joint resolution authorizing the use of force against the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks.[525] Following *Quirin* by analogy, a court might determine that the President's inherent authority, along with the congressional authorization to use force against al Qaeda, provides sufficient justification to permit trial by military commission.

---

[522] UCMJ art. 21 (2000).

[523] *Quirin*, 317 U.S. at 11.

[524] *See* 32 C.F.R. § 9.2 (2005) (broadly defining the personal jurisdiction of military commissions to include anyone associated with al Qaeda and the subject matter jurisdiction to include crimes of terrorism). Hamdan is accused of committing some crimes, such as conspiracy to commit terrorism before the September 11 attacks took place and before passage of the Congressional authorization to use force against al Qaeda.

[525] *See* Joint Resolution of Congress Authorizing the Use of Force, Pub. L. No. 107-40, 115 Stat. 224 (2001).

The above analysis demonstrates that the Supreme Court lacks an effective methodology to define the constitutional limits of military jurisdiction. The Court's reliance on originalism has led to fact-specific, results-oriented decisions that provide little precedential value for current and future military exigencies. Neither *Milligan*, nor *Quirin*, nor any of the other military jurisdiction cases, address whether the current use of military commissions is constitutional. As importantly, the Court's decisions fail to provide any meaningful distinction between military tribunals and constitutional courts. The Supreme Court can resolve this problem by expressly adopting a consistent methodology for analyzing the constitutional limits of military jurisdiction.

VI. An Alternative Methodology for Analyzing Military Jurisdiction

A. Translation Theory and Fidelity to the Constitution

Constitutional scholar and Stanford law professor Larry Lessig advocates an alternative to originalism in constitutional interpretation.[526] Lessig argues that in addition to originalism, the Supreme Court has also used a method of interpretation known as constitutional translation.[527] Translation "aims at finding a current reading of the original

[526] Lessig, *Fidelity in Translation*, *supra* note 499.

[527] For some of Lessig's numerous writings concerning translation, see for example, Lawrence Lessig, *Erie-Effects of Volume 110: An Essay on Context in Interpretive Theory*, 110 HARV. L. REV. 1785 (1997); Lawrence Lessig, *Fidelity and Constraint*, 65 FORDHAM L. REV. 1365 (1997); Lawrence Lessig, *Fidelity in Translation*, 71 TEX. L. REV. 1165 (1993); Lawrence Lessig, *Reading the Constitution in Cyberspace*, 45 EMORY L. J. 869 (1996); Lawrence Lessig, *Translating Federalism: United States v. Lopez*, 1995 SUP. CT. REV. 125; Lawrence Lessig, *Understanding Changed Readings: Fidelity and Theory*, 47 STAN. L. REV. 395 (1995); Lawrence Lessig & Cass R. Sunstein, *The President and the Administration*, 94 COLUM. L. REV. 1 (1994).

Constitution that preserves its original meaning in the present context."[528] Lessig explains that translation is a two-part test: "the first [step] is to locate a meaning in an original context, the second is to ask how that meaning is to be carried to a current context."[529] Lessig, and other proponents of translation, contend that it is superior to originalism's textualist approach, which forces courts to "appl[y] the original text now the same as it would have been applied then,"[530] and focuses on language to the exclusion of the original meaning of the text.[531] These scholars argue that translation should be used when circumstances have significantly changed since adoption of the Constitution, such as cases like military jurisdiction. This interpretive method translates the original constitutional protections created by the Founders to the changed circumstances reflected in modern society by "deciding the present in terms of the past. Its aim is to choose in a way that is faithful to the choices of the past, to translate the commitments of the past into a fundamentally different context."[532]

---

[528] LAWRENCE LESSIG, CODE AND OTHER LAWS OF CYBERSPACE 114 (1997).

[529] Lessig, *Fidelity and Constraint*, *supra* note 527, at 1372

[530] Lessig, *Fidelity in Translation*, *supra* note 499, at 1183.

[531] There are other scholars who have argued that translation is superior to originalism. *See*, *e.g.*, Martin S. Flaherty, *The Most Dangerous Branch*, 105 YALE L. J. 1725, 1811 (1996) (stating "the most appropriate way to maintain fidelity to the Founding is not through literal 'originalism,' such as that advanced by Justice Scalia and Judge Bork, but through models that serve the Founders' more general purposes in light of changed circumstances."); Charles A. Reich, *Property Law and the New Economic Order: A Betrayal of Middle Americans and the Poor*, 71 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 817, 822 (1996) ("A Constitution is merely words—subject to changes in meaning and context over time. As Lawrence Lessig has argued convincingly, fidelity to the true meaning of the Constitution often requires an exercise in translation, the purpose of which is to bring the document's provisions forward to the changed context of today."); Willard C. Shih, *Assisted Suicide, the Due Process Clause and "Fidelity in Translation,"* 63 FORDHAM L. REV. 1245, 1271 (arguing translation is "preferable to 'originalism' because it 'incorporates the ratifiers' intent into the method of interpretation.").

[532] LESSIG, *supra* note 528, at 109.

While Lessig is credited with renewing academic interest in translation, it has been a consistent method of constitutional interpretation throughout Supreme Court history. In 1928, in *Olmstead v. United States*,[533] Justice Brandies provided one of the Court's earliest articulations of translation theory. Since that time, it has remained a constant (though prior to Lessig often unarticulated) methodology in the Supreme Court's constitutional jurisprudence.[534] Translation is not a radical principle or a seldom-used practice, but "common in our constitutional history, and central to the best in our constitutional traditions."[535] In recent years, several prominent scholars have supported Lessig's translation model as an effective method of interpreting the Constitution.[536] The Supreme Court also recently relied on translation in several landmark decisions restricting Congress' Article I

---

[533] 277 U.S. 438, 464-65 (1928).

[534] *See generally* Lessig, *Fidelity in Translation*, *supra* note 499.

[535] LESSIG, *supra* note 528, at 116.

[536] Translation has gained the attention of numerous scholars and law review articles. For a review of this literature, see *Symposium, Fidelity in Constitutional Theory*, 65 FORDHAM L. REV. 1247, 1365-1517 (1997) (containing articles on the translation model by Lawrence Lessig, Steven G. Calabresi, Sanford Levinson, Jed Rubenfeld, Abner S. Greene). Other articles that have explicitly advocated translation include: Frances H. Foster, *Translating Freedom From Post-1997 Hong Kong*, 76 WAS. U. L. Q. 113 (1998) (applying translation principles to Hong Kong's basic law guarantees); William Michael Treanor, *Fame, The Founding, and the Power to Declare War*, 82 Cornell L. Rev. 695, 758 (1997) (applying translation model to War Powers Clause); Albert W. Alschuler, *A Peculiar Privilege in Historical Perspective: The Right to Remain Silent*, 94 MICH. L. REV. 2625, 2668 (1996) (using translation to support treating today's sworn statements like the unsworn statements of the past to meet the Framers' understanding); Akhil Reed Amar, *Reinventing Juries: Ten Suggested Reforms*, 28 U.C. DAVIS L. REV. 1169, 1173 n.9 (1995) (applying translation to jury reforms); Willard C. Shih, *Assisted Suicide, the Due Process Clause and "Fidelity in Translation,"* 63 FORDHAM L. REV. 1245 (1995) (applying translation to context of assisted suicide); William Michael Treanor, *The Original Understanding of the Takings Clause and the Political Process*, 95 COLUM. L. REV. 782, 784 (1995) (applying translation model to the Takings Clause); Akhil Reed Amar, *Fourth Amendment First Principles*, 107 HARV. L. REV. 757, 816 n.223 (1994) (arguing citizen review panels are an example of 'fidelity' in 'translation' to the participatory democracy underlying the American jury system).

Despite its recent popularity, translation is not without critics. For some critiques of the translation model, see William W. Fisher III, *Texts and Contexts: The Application to American Legal History of the Methodologies of Intellectual History*, 49 STAN. L. REV. 1065 (1997); Michael J. Klarman, *Antifidelity*, 70 S. CAL. L. REV. 381 (1997).

power to regulate Commerce.[537] Analyzing the Court's use of translation in limiting Congress' Article I, Commerce Clause power may be useful in determining how the Court could limit the Legislative and Executive powers over military jurisdiction.

Article I of the Constitution gives Congress plenary authority to regulate interstate commerce: "The Congress shall have the power . . . to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with Indian Tribes."[538] Historically, based on the plain language of Article I the Supreme Court has been exceedingly deferential to congressional efforts to regulate interstate commerce.[539] Despite the plenary nature of Congress' commerce power, the Supreme Court began limiting Congress' exceedingly broad power under the Commerce Clause[540] in two relatively recent cases: *United States v. Lopez*,[541] and *United States v. Morrison*.[542] The Court justified these holdings as necessary to ensure that Congress did not "effectually obliterate the distinction between what is

[537] For a discussion of the Court's use of translation in limiting the Commerce Clause s*ee* Lessig, *Translating Federalism, supra* note 527, at 125.

[538] U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 1.

[539] For an example of the Court's historic approach to Congress' power to regulate commerce, *see* United States v. Morrison, 529 U.S 598, 605 (2000) ("We need not repeat that detailed review of the Commerce Clause's history here; it suffices to say that, in the years since *NLRB v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp*., 301 U.S. 1 (1937), Congress has had considerably greater latitude in regulating conduct and transactions under the Commerce Clause than our previous case law permitted.").

[540] In *Lopez*, the Court struck down The Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990, 18 U.S.C. § 922(q) (2000), which criminalized the use of handguns near public schools. *See Lopez*, 514 U.S. at 561. In *Morrison*, the Court denied Congress the authority to criminalize gender-motivated violence. The Congressional statute in question was *The Violence Against Women Act of 1994*. § 40302, 108 Stat. 1941-42. Section 13981(c) of the Act established criminal liability against anyone who committed gender-motivated violence. *See Morrison*, 529 U.S. at 603.

[541] 514 U.S. 549 (1995).

[542] 529 U.S. 598 (2000).

national and what is local."[543] Congress can only "regulate those activities having a *substantial relation to interstate commerce,* . . . i.e., those activities that substantially affect interstate commerce."[544] Otherwise, "were the Federal Government to take over the regulation of entire areas of traditional state concern, areas having nothing to do with the regulation of commercial activities, the boundaries between the spheres of federal and state authority would blur."[545] Despite the express grant of authority given to Congress under the Commerce Clause, in *Lopez* and *Morrison,* the Court held that gun-free school zones and gender-based violence did not have substantial enough relation to interstate commerce to justify congressional regulation.[546]

The Supreme Court faced a common dilemma of constitutional interpretation in these decisions. The Court believed there was "little doubt that the scope of the [Commerce] powers now exercised by Congress far exceed[ed] that imagined by the framers. . . . But there was a second obviousness: That in the current interpretive context, the language of the Constitution's power clauses, read according to the formula given by the federal founding powers opinions, plainly supports this expanse of federal power."[547] In other words, prior to *Lopez* the Court had applied originalism and relied on a textualist approach to Congress'

[543] *Lopez*, 514 U.S. at 556-57.

[544] *Id.* at 558-59 (*citing* Jones & Laughlin Steel, 301 U.S. at 37) (emphasis added).

[545] *Id.* at 580.

[546] *See Morrison*, 529 U.S. at 615-16.

[547] Lessig, *Translating Federalism, supra* note 527, at 129.

commerce power and "allowed Congress a power, which reaches to the extreme of what the words of the [Commerce Clause] allow."[548]

In *Lopez* and *Morrison*, however, the Supreme Court refused to look solely to the text of the Commerce Clause in deciding the limits on congressional authority. Nor did the Court look to history and ask whether the Founders' would have allowed Congress to regulate gun-free schools or gender-based violence. Instead, the Court rejected the "textualist reading of the [Commerce Clause] in the name of fidelity to a founding understanding about how far these powers of Congress were to reach."[549] It recognized that the "Constitution requires a distinction between what is truly national and what is truly local."[550] Therefore, it placed constitutional boundaries on Congress' ability under the Commerce Clause in order to preserve the Founders' original balance of power between the states and the federal government based on our unique constitutional system of federalism. By requiring that congressional legislation show a substantial relation to interstate commerce, the Court redefined the boundaries between interstate commerce and the power of the states to regulate criminal conduct. In this way, the Court sought to remain faithful to the Founders' intention of maintaining separation of powers between the federal government and the states, while still recognizing Congress' broad authority under Article I to regulate commerce.

B. Applying Translation to Military Jurisdiction Cases

---

[548] *Id.*

[549] *Id.* at 130.

[550] *Morrison*, 529 U.S. at 616.

Just as the Court's pre-*Lopez* use of originalism failed to create meaningful boundaries between Congress' regulation of commerce and state police powers, the Court's use of originalism in the military jurisdiction cases has distorted the proper jurisdictional boundaries between military tribunals and constitutional courts under Article III. As a result, the Court has failed to fulfill the Founders' original intention of balancing Congress' and the President's war powers with the requirement that all 'cases and controversies' be resolved in constitutional courts. The Court can begin reconciling these competing values by using translation principles; that is, by applying the same test to its military jurisdiction jurisprudence as it has recently done in defining the boundaries of the Commerce Clause: the substantial relationship test.

There are important differences between Congress' power to regulate commerce and the power of both the President and Congress to convene military tribunals. Congress' power to regulate commerce and military tribunals derives from Article I Clause 8. However, the power to convene military tribunals derives not only from Congress' Article I war-making powers, but also from the President's authority under Article II as the Commander in Chief. The Commerce Clause deals with the relation between the federal government and the states; military tribunals deal with the relation between Legislative and Executive authority and that of the federal judiciary. Certainly, the Court should not employ the substantial relation test for military tribunals in the same manner it applied the test to interstate commerce cases. Rather, the Court should apply this test to military tribunals consistent with its analysis of the president's other war fighting powers.

In *Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer*,[551] the Supreme Court set forth the test to be used in determining the constitutionality of the President's war powers.[552] The case arose during the Korean War, when President Harry Truman issued an executive order seizing privately-owned steel mills in order to avoid an industry-side strike that he believed would cripple national security.[553] The issue before the Supreme Court in *Youngstown* was whether President Truman's executive action was lawful. The Court held that President Truman's

---

[551] 343 U.S. 579 (1953).

[552] Throughout its history, the Court has set forth two competing visions of how the Constitution limits the war powers of the President and Congress. These two competing paradigms have come to be known as the *Curtiss-Wright—Youngstown* debate. The *Curtiss-Wright—Youngstown* debate involves two distinct camps: the Presidentialists and the Congressionalists. The Presidentialists assert the preeminence of the president in national security, and advocate the Supreme Court's approach in *Curtiss-Wright*. *See* EDWARD S. CORWIN, THE PRESIDENT: OFFICE AND POWERS, 1787-1984, at 234, 256 (1984); William Treanor, *Fame, Founding, and the Power to Declare War*, 82 CORNELL L. REV. 695, 696 (2000) (listing several other scholars who argue for strong executive authority); John C. Yoo, *The Continuation of Politics by Other Means: The Original Understanding of War Powers*, 84 CAL. L. REV. 167 (1996); Eugene V. Rostow, *Great Cases Make Bad Law: The War Powers Act*, 50 TEX. L. REV. 833, 864-66 (1972); Henry P. Monaghan, *Presidential War-making*, 50 B.U. L. REV. 19 (1970); On the other hand the Congressionalists advocate a primary role for Congress in national security and look to the *Youngstown*, and in particular Justice Jackson's concurring opinion. *See* LOUIS FISHER, PRESIDENTIAL WAR POWER (1995); JOHN HART ELY, WAR AND RESPONSIBILITY CONSTITUTIONAL LESSONS OF VIETNAM AND ITS AFTERMATH 3-10 (1993); HAROLD H. KOH, THE NATIONAL SECURITY CONSTITUTION: SHARING POWER AFTER THE IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIR 74-77 (1990); ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR., THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY 1-26 (1973); Raoul Berger, *War-Making by the President*, 121 U. PA. L. REV. 29 (1972); Charles A. Lofgren, *War-Making Under the Constitution: The Original Understanding*, 81 YALE L.J. 672 (1972); Alexander M. Bickel, *Congress, the President and the Power to Wage War*, 48 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 131 (1971).

This article makes no attempt to provide an ultimate answer to the *Curtiss-Wright—Youngstown* debate. But it advocates Justice Jackson's *Youngstown* model for several reasons. First, military tribunals directly effect individual rights, and have been the subject of significant Congressional legislation. *See supra* note 46 for various sources supporting the proposition of Congress' importance in creating military jurisdiction. Second, *Youngstown* is most often applied in cases where individual rights are implicated, and in areas where Congress has actively legislated. *See, e.g.*, U.S. v New York Times, 403 U.S. 713, 788-91 (1971). For a detailed review (and critique) of this individual rights model see Roy E. Brownell II, *The Coexistence of* United States v. Curtis-Wright *and* Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer *in National Security Jurisprudence*, 16 J. L. & POLITICS 1, 88-91 (2000). For an article generally supportive of the individual rights model see Jide Nzelibe, *The Uniqueness of Foreign Affairs*, 89 IOWA L. REV. 941, 1009 (2004) ("In certain contexts, such as where individual rights are implicated, or where Congress has legislated in the relevant foreign policy area, judicial intervention is appropriate, albeit with significant deference to the political branches."). As such, the *Youngstown* model provides a natural fit for the analysis of military tribunals, which are the creation of both Congress and the President and implicate Article III concerns. As *Youngstown* is the more rigorous methodology, the substantial relation test can easily be adopted to the *Curtiss-Wrigh*t methodology.

[553] *Youngstown*, 343 U.S. at 584.

action unconstitutional.[554] Justice Jackson's concurring opinion established a tripartite model to determine the constitutionality of presidential action. He linked the constitutionality of the President's action to its harmony with the actions of Congress. Explaining his model, Justice Jackson wrote:

> When the President acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization of Congress, his authority is at its maximum, for it includes all that he possesses in his own right plus all that Congress can delegate. . . . If his act is held unconstitutional under these circumstances, it usually means that the Federal Government as an undivided whole lacks power. . . . When the President acts in absence of either a congressional grant or denial of authority, he can only rely upon his own independent powers, but there is a zone of twilight in which he and Congress may have concurrent authority, or in which its distribution is uncertain. Therefore, congressional inertia, indifference or quiescence may sometimes, at least as a practical matter, enable, if not invite, measures on independent presidential responsibility. . . . When the President takes measures incompatible with the expressed or implied will of Congress, his power is at its lowest ebb, for then he can rely only upon his own constitutional powers minus any constitutional powers of Congress over the matter. Courts can sustain exclusive presidential control in such a case only by disabling the Congress from acting upon the subject.[555]

Justice Jackson concluded that because Congress refused to authorize President Truman to seize the steel mills, President Truman's action were within the third category of judicial scrutiny, where presidential power was at its lowest ebb. Using this higher level of judicial scrutiny, the Court held that President Truman's executive order was unconstitutional.[556]

---

[554] *Id.* at 585. While Justice Black authored the opinion of the Court, Justice Jackson's opinion has become the case's controlling opinion. *See, e.g.*, Bowsher v. Synar, 478 U.S. 714, 721-22 (1986) (acknowledging that the Supreme Court unanimously endorsed Justice Jackson's concurring opinion in *Youngstown* in deciding U.S. v. Nixon, 418 U.S. 683, 707 (1974)).

[555] *Youngstown*, 343 U.S. at 635-38.

[556] *Id.* at 638.

As stated at the onset, the power to convene military tribunals originates from one of three places: Congress's power under Article I; the President's power pursuant to Article II; or Congress and the President's joint authority derived from both Articles I and II of the United States Constitution.[557] Imbedding the substantial relation test in Justice Jackson's three-tiered model might produce the following test to determine the constitutionality of a military tribunal: If the President attempts to use military courts with the express or implied authorization of Congress, his authority is at its maximum, and military jurisdiction should be upheld as long as there is a substantial relation to the President's military purpose. If Congress has specifically authorized the use of military tribunals under Article I, the Court should apply the substantial relation test as it did in the Commerce Clause cases and determine whether the military jurisdiction substantially relates to a legitimate military interest.[558] However, if the President establishes military courts without congressional approval, the President's use of military courts is more suspect, and the extension of military jurisdiction must survive closer scrutiny in order to be upheld. Finally, if the President extends military jurisdiction contrary to the will of Congress, the President's power is at its lowest ebb, and the Court should uphold the President's action only if it is truly necessary to achieve a compelling government interest.

C. Translation Effectively Reconciles Previous Supreme Court Decisions

---

[557] *See supra* notes 46-57 and accompanying text.

[558] The fact that the Court applies the same test as in commerce does not mean the Court needs to employ the same level of deference. For example, in *Morrison* the Supreme Court struck down the *Violence Against Women Act* despite "numerous [congressional] findings regarding the serious impact that gender-motivated violence" has on society. *Morrison*, 529 U.S. at 612 (2000). In contrast, the Court may decide to grant far greater deference to Congress or the President in determining the jurisdiction of military tribunals.

Part V.B explained the drawbacks of using originalism and demonstrated how reliance on that methodology led to contradictory Supreme Court decisions. Translation theory better explains those decisions and reconciles them into a workable methodology. For example, President Lincoln's decision to prosecute Milligan in Indiana following the Civil War was without congressional authorization. Therefore, his action should have been (and as a practical matter was) subject to the highest level of judicial scrutiny. Additionally, the rebellion ended a full year before the trial, and the civil courts remained open in Indiana throughout this period. This may explain the Court's skepticism about whether the President's actions were necessarily related to a compelling military objective. Nonetheless, four Justices in *Milligan* argued that if Congress had authorized the use of military commissions, Lincoln's use of military tribunals would have withstood constitutional scrutiny. Viewed from this perspective, *Milligan* is much more easily reconciled with the Court's decision in *Quirin* and its other military jurisdiction cases.

In *Quirin*, because Congress authorized military commissions to try offenses against the law of war, President Roosevelt's actions would fall within the first tier of judicial review and be subject to the greatest judicial deference. Accordingly, his use of military commissions would be constitutional as long as it served a substantial military purpose. Because the *Quirin* trial took place in the summer of 1942, when America's victory in World War II was very much in doubt, it is easier to understand the Court's willingness to uphold the President's decision that a speedy trial of German saboteurs by military tribunal served a substantial government interest. Translation theory may also help explain why the Court prohibited the use of military tribunals in *Duncan* following World War II, but upheld their

use in *Yamashita* and *Madsen*. In *Duncan*, though Congress had authorized imposition of martial law in Hawaii, the petitioners were two civilians with no connection to the military charged with minor common law crimes of assault and embezzlement. Moreover, the threat of an invasion of Hawaii greatly diminished and the civil courts were open and could have prosecuted these cases. The Court's resulting decision rightly concluded that the use of military tribunals to prosecute the two petitioners served no substantial military purpose under the circumstances. Yet, *Duncan* differs greatly from *Yamashita* and *Madsen*. Yamashita was a general in the Japanese military prosecuted in the Philippines for war crimes. Not only were his crimes not subject to trial in federal court, but his trial by military commission was pursuant to congressional authorization under Article of War 15. Therefore, the Court could reasonably conclude that punishing enemy combatants for violating the law of war during military occupation serves a substantial military purpose. Similarly, following World War II, Yvette Madsen lived in occupied Germany pursuant to her husband's military orders. When she killed her husband, there was no civil court in either the United States or in Germany with jurisdiction to prosecute her criminal behavior. As a result, it is logical that the Court upheld the President's decision to prosecute Madsen by military tribunal. Indeed, at the time, military tribunals were needed to protect the government's compelling interest in punishing those who murdered Soldiers serving in occupied territory that had no functioning judicial system. In *Madsen*, however, the Court was careful to note that if Congress passed legislation limiting the President's use of military tribunals, his action might not have survived constitutional challenge.

In analyzing the World War II cases, Charles Fairman sought to harmonize the Supreme Court's decision in *Duncan* with its other World War II decisions that upheld much more draconian war powers such as the internment of Japanese citizens. Fairman wrote:

> A rational and wholly adequate explanation lies in this, that such measures as were sustained, though drastic, had a clear relation to a permissible end; the justification for trying Duncan and White by [military] court really came to nothing more that '*ipse dixit* of the commander.' We need a new doctrine for the future. We need not evolve new doctrine, for nothing that the Court had decided is inconsistent with what has always been sound in principle. . . . Since the Constitution commits to the Executive and to Congress the exercise of the war power . . . it is necessarily given them a wide scope for the exercise of judgment and discretion in determining the nature and extent of the threatened injury or danger and in the selection of the means for resisting it. But those who exercise it must be prepared to satisfy the courts that there was a 'direct relation,' a 'substantial basis for the conclusion' that this was indeed 'a protective measure necessary to meet the threat.'[559]

Fairman's observations accurately reflect the consistent theme found in the Supreme Court's military jurisdiction cases and identifies the methodology that should be applied in analyzing the Constitutional limits of military commissions.

Similarly, the Supreme Court's recent cases limiting courts-martial jurisdiction are better understood using the translation model. *Toth* and the other personal jurisdiction cases were all decided following Congress' passage of the UCMJ. Because Congress specifically authorized this extension of military jurisdiction, the Supreme Court's review of courts-martial jurisdiction deserved the Supreme Court's greatest deference under *Youngstown's* model. Yet, the Court repeatedly held Congress' extension of military jurisdiction

[559] Fairman, *supra* note 381, at 857-58 (citations omitted).

unconstitutional in several of these instances. The lead opinions in these cases relied on textual arguments of whether someone was a "member of the armed forces." Many of the concurring opinions, however, relied on the view that Congress' extension of military jurisdiction was not substantially related to a legitimate military interest.[560] In several such concurring opinions, Justices Harlan and Frankfurter rejected the use of originalism[561] and advocated a balancing test similar to the substantial relation test proposed here. For example, in *Reid*, Justice Harlan wrote:

> I think it no answer to say, as my brother BLACK does, that 'having run up against the steadfast bulwark of the Bill of Rights, the Necessary and Proper Clause cannot extend the scope of [Art. I] Clause 14.' For that simply begs the question as to whether there is such a collision, an issue to which I address myself below. For analytical purposes, I think it useful to break down the issue before us into two questions: First, is there a rational connection between the trial of these army wives by court-martial and the power of Congress to make rules for the governance of the land and naval forces; in other words, is there any initial power here at all? Second, if there is such a rational connection, to what extent does this statute, though reasonably calculated to subserve an enumerated power, collide with other express limitations on congressional power; in other words, can this statute, however appropriate to the Article I power looked at in isolation, survive against the requirements of Article III and the Fifth and Sixth Amendments.[562]

---

[560] Even Justice Black—the leading Supreme Court advocate of originalism—deviated from a literal interpretation of the Constitution in *Toth*, when he wrote that the constitutionality of military jurisdiction was limited to "the least possible power adequate to the end proposed." Toth v. Quarles, 350 U.S. 11, 23 (1955). Similarly, in *Reid v. Covert*, he wrote that "there might be circumstances where a person could be 'in' the armed services for purposes of [military jurisdiction] even though he had not formally been inducted into the military or did not wear a uniform." Reid v. Covert, 354 U.S. 1, 22-23 (1957).

[561] In *Reid*, Justice Frankfurter wrote: "The cases cannot be decided simply by saying that, since these women were not in uniform, they were not 'in the land and naval Forces.' The Court's function in constitutional adjudications is not exhausted by a literal reading of words." *Reid*, 354 U.S. at 70. Similarly in *Singelton*, Justice Harlan wrote "the true issue on this aspect of all such cases concerns the closeness or remoteness of the relationship between the person affected and the military establishment." *Ex. rel Singleton*, 361 U.S. 234, 257 (1960).

[562] *Reid*, 354 U.S. at 70 (Harlan, J., concurring).

Similarly, Justice Frankfurter wrote:

> [W]e must weigh all the factors involved in these cases in order to decide whether these women dependents are so closely related to what Congress may allowably deem essential for the effective 'Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces,' that they may be subjected to court-martial jurisdiction in these capital cases, when the consequence is loss of the protections afforded by Article III and the Fifth and Sixth Amendments.[563]

These justices voted to prohibit this extension of military jurisdiction to military spouses because they felt the evidence did not indicate that prosecuting family members was "clearly demanded" for the effective regulation of the armed forces such as to justify the use of military courts.[564] This article advocates the application of this rationale to all military jurisdiction cases, consistent with the *Youngstown* model.

In critically examining the Court's personal jurisdiction cases, Joseph Bishop wrote a persuasive law review article demonstrating why the Court's reliance on originalism was misguided, and advocating that the cases are better understood, and better decided, by the substantial relation test advanced by Justices Harlan and Frankfurter. He wrote:

> [T]he Court can no doubt attempt to solve the problem by attempting more or less arbitrarily to decide at what point on the military-civilian spectrum a particular class shades into one community or the other. A more flexible, though probably more difficult approach, perhaps better calculated to reconcile fairness to the man with the legitimate needs of the military establishment, might be to give more weight to the 'necessary and proper' clause and to consider in each case not merely the military 'status' of the

[563] *Reid*, 354 U.S. at 45 (Frankfurter, J., concurring).

[564] *Id.* at 47.

> individual, but also the nature, military or civilian, of the offense involved and the punishment to be inflicted.[565]

Bishop's critique remains as true today as it did when he wrote it in 1964. Expanding the substantial relation test to apply not just to courts-martial created under Congress power to regulate the armed forces, but also to every case involving the use of military tribunals, will provide a consistent and effective methodology for ensuring the proper balance between military and constitutional courts.

VII. Applying Translation to the Current Use of Military Tribunals

A. Translation Theory Resolves Modern Military Jurisdiction Questions

Historically, whenever the Supreme Court faced a military-civilian hybrid case, such as a Navy paymaster, a discharged soldier, a military prisoner, or a military family member, the Court relied on originalism to either subject the entire group of people completely to military jurisdiction, or to exclude them altogether. Rather than relying on this inferior methodology, the Court should employ the substantial relation test to determine which offenders and offenses are substantially related to the military mission. In each instance, the Court should examine the military's nexus to both the accused, and his conduct. It then should determine whether that nexus creates enough of a substantial relation with the military mission to constitutionally justify the use of a military tribunal instead of a constitutional court. This balancing test would not prevent the Court from drawing bright line rules. For

[565] Bishop, *supra* note 511, at 377.

example, the Court might conclude that the military interest is sufficient to constitutionally permit military jurisdiction of all offenses committed and prosecuted on the battlefield regardless of whether the accused is a civilian, a Soldier, or a military contractor. Similarly, the Court might conclude that the Constitution cannot justify prosecuting anyone for a purely civilian offense such as tax evasion regardless of whether the accused is an active duty soldier, a reservist, or a retiree.

Returning to our fictional scenarios at the beginning of this article helps demonstrate the effectiveness of using this approach. Should a military tribunal have jurisdiction over an Air Force spouse in England; a Marine Corps employee in Iraq; white supremacists in North Carolina; or a retired fighter pilot in Nebraska? Following translation analysis there can be no doubt that the military has a substantial interest in prosecuting an employee who demolishes an Air Force plane and murders Airmen and Soldiers serving overseas. The military also has a similarly important interest in prosecuting military contractors accused of torturing detainees while performing their duties on the battlefield. While the military has some interest in prosecuting ex-Soldiers that commit crimes on their former military installation, this is closer call and reasonable minds may differ. But, one is hard pressed to assert that the military has a legitimate interest in prosecuting retirees who commit common law crimes like tax evasion, which are completely unrelated to the military mission.

B. Hamdan's Military Commission Fails to Allege a Law of War Crime and Lacks Congressional Support

The first step in applying the translational model to Hamdan is determining the proper standard of judicial review. This requires a determination of whether the military commission prosecuting Hamdan derives its authority from the joint authority of the President and Congress or whether it is based solely on the President's inherent authority as Commander in Chief. If the President is acting with congressional support, his authority is at its maximum and the government need only show that the military commission is substantially related to a legitimate government interest. However, if the President is acting contrary to Congress' express will his power is at its lowest ebb and the government must demonstrate that military commissions are necessary to achieve a compelling state interest. As previously stated, the only four grounds for military jurisdiction are military discipline of soldiers, military occupation, martial law, or violations of the law of war.[566] A law of war court is the only basis for the current use of military commissions. As Lieutenant Colonel Bickers wrote:

> A law of war military commission is the only kind of military commission at issue in the War Against Terrorism. There is obviously no need for martial law anywhere within the United States. The United States has not asserted the role of an occupier in Afghanistan or anywhere else in connection with the war. This elimination of the two area-jurisdiction military commissions means that any commission convened under the Military Order must be subject to the inherent subject matter limitations of the law of war commission.[567]

[566] *See supra* note 27 and accompanying text.

[567] Bickers, *supra* note 31, at 912.

Article 21 of the UCMJ establishes military jurisdiction over "offenders or offenses that by statute or by the law of war" are triable by military commission.[568] The President has congressional authorization under Article 21 to prosecute Hamdan by military commission if Hamdan is subject to military trial for violating the law of war.[569]

The military captured Hamdan on the Afghanistan battlefield during international armed conflict.[570] Accordingly, a military tribunal possess personal jurisdiction over Hamdan as long as there is reason to believe he is guilty of violating the law of war.[571] However, a law of war court requires that "the act charged is an offense against the law of war cognizable before a military tribunal."[572] Even assuming that non-state actors like al Qaeda can be prosecuted for violating the law of war, [573] the current charge against Hamdan does not allege a war crime. Rather, Hamdan's charge of conspiracy to commit war crimes is not an offense under the law of war.

---

[568] UCMJ art. 21 (2002).

[569] Articles 104 and 106 of the UCMJ list two statutory offenses that apply to all persons, not just Soldiers who are otherwise subject to the UCMJ. Because Article 21 allows for the use of military tribunals for offenses that are punishable "by statute or the law of war," Articles 194 and 106 might provide another basis for military jurisdiction. However, Hamdan is not charged with a violation of either of these two articles.

[570] Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 344 F. Supp. 2d 152, 154 (D.D.C. 2004).

[571] *See Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1 (1942) (upholding military jurisdiction over alleged U.S citizen for war crimes). *But see* United States v. Averette, 19 U.S.C.M.A. 363 (41 C.M.R. 364) (1970) (limiting military jurisdiction to civilians only in times of declared war).

[572] *Quirin,* 317 U.S at 29.

[573] There is a legitimate argument that the law of war cannot apply to non-state actors such as al Qaeda, because the Geneva Conventions deliberately limited the law of war to conflict between nations or at least between nations and organized dissident armed forces. *See* George H. Aldrich, *The Law of War on Land,* 94 AM. J. INT'L L. 42 (2000). *See also* AM. BAR ASS'N., *supra* note 11, at 7 ("Since World War II, there has been considerable debate about the application of the law of war to conflicts involving non-state actors.").

International law does not recognize conspiracy as an offense under the law of war. Neither the Geneva Conventions nor the Hague Convention defines conspiracy as a war crime. While Congress exhaustively defined war crimes by passage and amendment of the War Crimes Act,[574] none of the treaties Congress references or the definitions it uses to define war crimes includes the crime of conspiracy. Conspiracy to commit war crimes has never been formally recognized as a violation of the law of war before any military tribunal.[575] Following World War II, neither the Nuremberg Charter nor the Charter for the Tokyo tribunals considered conspiracy to commit war crimes an offense under the law of war.[576] Similarly, neither the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), nor the International Criminal Court (ICC), recognize conspiracy as a criminal offense despite embracing other inchoate theories of criminal responsibility such as 'command responsibility' and 'joint criminal enterprise'.[577] In fact, while the military commission in *Quirin* charged and convicted the saboteurs of multiple offenses including conspiracy, the Supreme Court refused to recognize the validity of the conspiracy charge. Rather the Court stated:

> It is enough that petitioners here, upon the conceded facts, were plainly within those boundaries, and were held in good faith for trial by military commission, charged with being enemies who, with the purpose of destroying war

[574] War Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. § 2441 (2000).

[575] *See* ANTONIO CASSESSE, INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW 197 (2003) (noting that "conspiracy has never been used to prosecute an inchoate offense against the law of war.").

[576] *See* Major Edward J. O'Brien, *The Nuremberg Principles, Command Responsibility, and the Defense of Captain Rockwood*, 149 MIL. L. REV. 275, 281 (1995).

[577] *See* Richard P. Barrett, *Lessons of Yugoslav Rape Trials: A Role for Conspiracy Law in International Tribunals*, 88 MINN. L. REV 30, 60-61 (2003).

> materials and utilities, entered, or after entry remained in, our territory without uniform—an offense against the law of war. *We hold only that those particular acts constitute an offense against the law of war, which the Constitution authorizes to be tried by military commission.*[578]

Because the government's sole charge of conspiracy against Hamdan is not an offense under the law of war, the President's military commission lacks congressional support. Therefore, the constitutionality of Hamdan's military commission rests solely on the President's inherent authority as Commander in Chief.

C. Hamdan's Trial by Military Commission is Unconstitutional

Under the translation framework previously articulated, the Court could still uphold the constitutionality of Hamdan's military commission if it finds that the President's action is necessary to achieve a compelling military interest. However, the President cannot demonstrate that Hamdan's trial by military commission meets that stringent test. There is no doubt that the President has constitutional authority to protect America's national security.[579] However, prosecuting Hamdan by military commissions is not necessary in order to protect America from further attack. As Clinton Rossiter wrote in critiquing Milligan's trial by military commission:

---

[578] *Ex parte* Quirin, 317 U.S. 1, 46 (1942) (emphasis added).

[579] Protecting America's national security is an obviously compelling interest. However, the Congress' Resolution authorizing the President to use force against the perpetrators of the September 11th attack "in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States" furthers demonstrates the compelling interest. *See* Joint Resolution: To Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Those Responsible for the Recent Attacks Launched Against the United States, Pub. L. No. 107-40, 115 Stat. 224, 224 (2001).

> It is no answer to point out that the regular courts . . . were more of a hindrance than help to the cause of the Union; for if the military authorities did not trust the civil courts, they had only to keep their suspects locked up until the danger had passed. This, indeed, was the usual method of handling these cases. In other words, it was arguable that, under the conditions then obtaining, Milligan should be denied the privilege of the writ, but it was not necessary to go further and place him on trial before a military court.[580]

This past year, Justice Thomas echoed this sentiment in *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*.[581] Justice Thomas stated in his dissenting opinion that by allowing the detainees at Guantanamo Bay to file a petition for *habeas corpus* the Court failed to respect the President's inherent authority to detain alleged enemy combatants. He maintained that the President's decision to detain suspected enemies "should not be subjected to judicial second-guessing."[582] However, Justice Thomas concluded that once the President moves beyond detaining enemy combatants and seeks to punish them by military tribunal, the Court rightfully reviews whether the President is within his war-making authority.[583] While the President might be able to demonstrate the need to detain Hamdan because of his alleged criminal activity, the President cannot demonstrate that Hamdan's prosecution by military tribunal is necessary in order to protect national security. Accordingly, the President's decision to unilaterally prosecute Hamdan by military commission should be found unconstitutional.

---

[580] ROSSITER & LONGAKER, *supra* note 55, at 36.

[581] 124 S. Ct. 2633 (2004).

[582] *Hamdi*, 124 S. Ct. at 2682 (Thomas, J., dissenting)

[583] *Id.* ("More importantly, the Court referred frequently and pervasively to the criminal nature of the proceedings instituted against *Milligan* . . . the punishment-non-punishment distinction harmonizes all of the precedent.").

D. Military Commissions at Guantanamo Bay Still Might be Constitutional Under Translation Methodology

While the above analysis demonstrates why the military commission prosecuting Hamdan is unconstitutional, this does not mean that every use of military commissions in fighting the global war on terrorism is unconstitutional. The President's order authorizes the use of military commissions in a variety of circumstances. His order applies to various individuals including: armed combatants captured on the battlefield, lawful U.S. resident aliens, illegal immigrants, and citizens of friendly nations captured in their home country.[584] Similarly, military commissions assert jurisdiction over a broad range of offenses including: unlawful belligerency during armed conflict, terrorism, conspiracy, and perjury.[585] Obviously, each person the President chooses to prosecute by military commission will have a unique relationship to the military based on who the accused is and the offenses he is charged with. There are numerous detainees currently at Guantanamo Bay with cases currently pending in federal court.[586] While the President's decision to prosecute Hamdan by military tribunal for conspiracy is not constitutional, that does not mean the Constitution necessarily prohibits the use of a military tribunal in other situations, such as against a senior al Qaeda leader charged in the September 11 attacks. Rather, using the translation

[584] 32 C.F.R. § 9.3 (2005) (defining the Jurisdiction of military commissions). *See also supra* note 431 and accompanying text (listing several other detainees being held at Guantanamo Bay who were captured in their own nation outside of a traditional battlefield).

[585] 32 CFR § 11.6 (2005) (listing all of the offenses punishable by military commission).

[586] *See* Brief for Appellee at iv-v, Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 344 F. Supp. 2d 152, 173-74 (D.D.C. 2004), *available at* http://www.law.georgetown.edu /faculty /nkk/documents/hamdanBrief12-29-04.pdf (listing eighteen different cases brought by detainees at Guantanamo Bay currently pending in federal district court).

methodology, the Court can determine whether the accused and his charged offenses are so substantially related to the military mission to constitutionally permit trial in military court.

VIII. Conclusion

While the Constitution gives Congress and the President the joint authority to wage war and protect America's national security, it also requires that all federal trials be heard in constitutional courts. When these two constitutional mandates conflict the Supreme Court bears responsibility to interpret the Constitution and resolve that dispute. Translation theory allows the Court to uniformly analyze all assertions of military jurisdiction whether they involve courts-martial, martial law, military government, or law of war courts. In each case, the translation framework properly balances the military's need to accomplish its mission, with the Constitution's mandate that all federal trials be heard in constitutional courts. Accordingly, the Court should expressly adopt translation theory and use it in analyzing the constitutional boundaries of military courts.